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JOURNAL  
of  
EARLY SOUTHERN  
DECORATIVE ARTS

May, 1979  
Volume V, Number 1  
The Museum of Early Southern  
Decorative Arts

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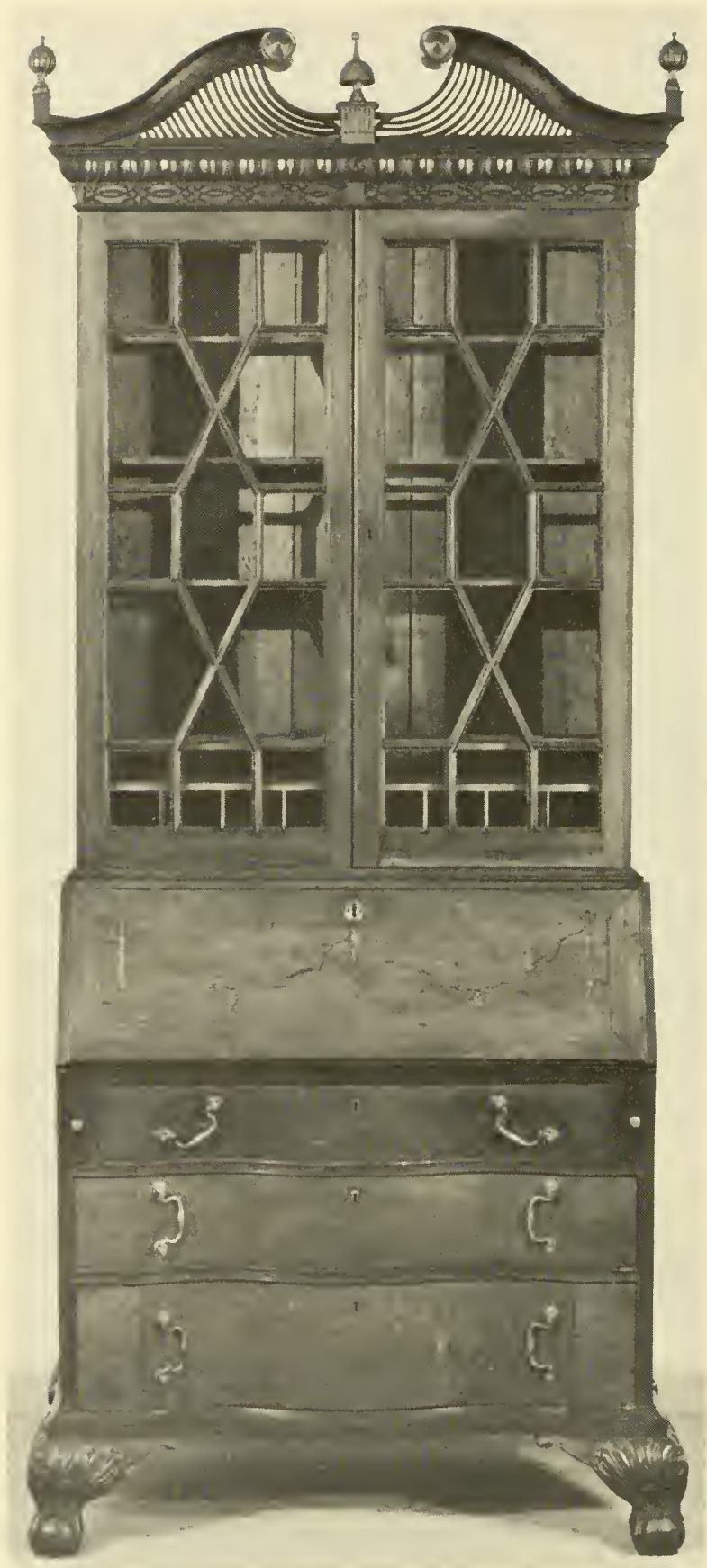
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*Figure 1.*

## *John Shearer, Joiner of Martinsburgh*

JOHN J. SNYDER, JR.

Before the appearance of the signed John Shearer desk-and-bookcase at auction in New York in February, 1978, the name of this West Virginia cabinetmaker was not generally known to students of American furniture (Fig. 1).<sup>1</sup> However, for fifty years his name has been known to a handful of people. In 1929, Edward Knedle, an early dealer in Hagerstown, Maryland, informed the owners of the desk-and-bookcase now in the collection of the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts that he knew about "three of these desks" made by a "John Sharon" [sic] of Martinsburg, West Virginia.<sup>2</sup> In 1970, the writer discovered a signed John Shearer chest of five tiers of drawers (Fig. 2) and commenced research on the often elusive John Shearer. Today, seven pieces of furniture may be credited securely to John Shearer. This body of work constitutes the largest group of documented Chippendale furniture that can be credited definitely to any Southern cabinetmaker, with the exception of the numerous pieces bearing the label of John Shaw

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*Figure 1. Desk-and-bookcase signed by John Shearer of Martinsburg, West Virginia. Numerous inscriptions on the desk section indicate that it was made by John Shearer in Martinsburg in August and September, 1801. The exterior back of the bookcase section is signed "By/Shearer/Joiner/1806." For its scale, complexity of design, and lavish ornamentation, this piece may be regarded as Shearer's masterpiece. 106" HOA, 41" WOA, 24½" DOA. Walnut and cherry primary woods; yellow pine and oak secondary woods. Collection of the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts. MESDA research file 2979.*

of Annapolis, Maryland. Further, John Shearer is one of the few Shenandoah Valley cabinetmakers whose works have been identified. This study seeks to establish a groundwork for further research on John Shearer and his furniture.



*Photograph by J. P. Herr.*

*Figure 2. Chest of drawers signed at least fourteen times by John Shearer of Martinsburg and dated 1804. The ogee bracket feet are a conjectural restoration. The brasses are a replacement, and although those on the top two tiers of drawers occupy the original positions, plugged holes on the bottom three drawers indicate a different original placement there. Tack marks between the cornice and the top tier of drawers may indicate the presence of a now-lost ornamental frieze. Walnut primary wood; yellow pine and poplar secondary woods. 53½" HOA, 43 5/8" WOA, 24" DOA. Private collection.*



The initial evidence for identifying John Shearer as maker is presented in the numerous inscriptions that he placed on interior surfaces, back boards, and inlays. Six of the seven Shearer pieces illustrated here retain legible inscriptions. In fact, the desk and bookcase (Fig. 1) is signed at least twenty times,<sup>3</sup> and the chest with five tiers of drawers is signed at least fourteen times (Fig. 2).<sup>4</sup> The desk with an armorial type of inlay is signed at least nine times.<sup>5</sup> The serpentine-front low chest of drawers is signed twice (Fig. 3), and each of the pier tables is signed once. The majority of these inscriptions are written in red crayon, and



*Photograph reproduced from Antiques, January 1965, p. 64.*

*Figure 3. Chippendale chest of drawers signed twice by John Shearer of Martinsburg and dated 1800. Walnut primary wood; yellow pine secondary wood. 37" HOA, 38" WOA, 22½" DOA. Private collection.*

a few are written in pencil. Only the walnut pier table made for Elizabeth Filler is signed in an inlaid medallion (Figs. 6 and 9). Representative of the script and wording of the crayon, pencil, and incised inscriptions are the lines "made by me, John Shearer Sebt<sup>f</sup> 1801 from Edinburgh 1775/Made in Martinsburgh" that appear on the back of a drawer of the desk and bookcase in the collection of the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts (Fig. 8).

Three of the inscribed pieces bear dates. In addition to the writing cited above, the desk section of the desk-and-bookcase bears two other inscriptions dated with both month and year, one reading "Made/by/Shearer/Aug<sup>t</sup> 1801" and another reading "Made by Shearer Nov. 180-." Thus, the desk section of this piece may be dated between August and November, 1801. On the back of the bookcase section of this desk-and-bookcase appears the pencil inscription "By/Shearer/Joiner/1806," written upside down. It is interesting to note that the bookcase section was fabricated about five years after the desk. The chest of five tiers of drawers is dated 1804 three times (Fig. 2). A red crayon inscription within the side of the low chest of drawers dates it 1800 (Fig. 3).

It is also noteworthy that the three signed and dated pieces also give the place of manufacture as "Martinsburgh." This follows the old spelling for the town that always has been the seat of Berkeley County.<sup>6</sup> Martinsburg is noted three times in writing on the desk section of the desk-and-bookcase (Fig. 1), three times in inscriptions on the chest of five tiers of drawers (Fig. 2), and once on the low chest of drawers (Fig. 3).<sup>7</sup> The other four Shearer pieces bear no notations identifying the place where they were produced.

Five of these signed pieces bear inscriptions identifying John Shearer as being "From Edinburgh." This appears five times on the desk-and-bookcase (Figs. 1 and 8), twice on the chest of five tiers of drawers (Fig. 2), twice on the desk with an armorial type of inlay on the fall lid (Fig. 4), once in the pencil inscription on the underside of the top of the cherry and mahogany pier table (Fig. 7), and once, although abbreviated "Ed<sup>n</sup>boro," on the inlay of the Elizabeth Filler pier table (Fig. 6). The inscriptions on both the desk-and-bookcase and the chest of five tiers of drawers further identify Shearer as being "From Edinburgh—1775." The interpretation that these inscriptions place Shearer's origins in the small town of Edinburgh on Stony Creek in Shenandoah

County, Virginia, is weakened by the fact that the town was frequently known by another name.<sup>8</sup> Thus, it is more likely that Edinburgh refers to an origin in Scotland.

Two of the Shearer pieces discussed here bear writing indicating the maker's Tory sympathies. On the interior back of a shell-carved drawer of the interior of the desk-and-bookcase is



*Figure 4. Desk signed repeatedly by Shearer, including "By Shearer [sic] / Joiner / From Edinburgh" on the underside of the writing surface. Apparently, the inscriptions are undated. The interpretation of the inscriptions on the inlays is discussed in the text of this article. Walnut, oak, birch, and lightwood inlays constitute the primary woods; the secondary woods are oak, walnut, yellow pine, and poplar. 46" HOA, 38 1/4" WOA, 22 5/8" DOA. Private collection. MESDA research file 8689.*



written "God Save the King 1801" (Fig. 1). The chest of five tiers of drawers bears more numerous Tory inscriptions, including "God Save the King/By Me/John Shearer" written beneath the top, and "From a Tory/Vive le Roy/1804/God Save the King/by me John Shearer" written on the interior of the second drawer from the bottom. Possibly the inlay on the fall lid of the desk (Fig. 4) pictorially expresses the same sentiments, for the crowned lion rampant is an obvious British symbol. Even the motto "Victory Be Thine" incised above the lion may emphasize the "tory" in the last four letters of the word "Victory." It is believed that these are the only known pieces of American furniture bearing pro-Tory inscriptions or symbols.



*Photograph courtesy of the owner.*

*Figure 5. Desk apparently unsigned, here attributed to John Shearer, c. 1800-1806. In form, ornament, and all structural details, this desk is very closely related to the desk section of the desk-and-bookcase illustrated in Figure 1. It is possible that inscriptions on interior surfaces may have been obliterated by the varnish that covers the drawer interiors. Cherry and lightwood inlays constitute the primary woods; the secondary wood is yellow pine. 48" HOA, 44" WOA, 22" DOA. Private collection.*

The histories of these pieces complement and strengthen the evidence supplied by the inscriptions. Three of the seven Shearer pieces are without any information about early or original ownership. The desk attributed to John Shearer on stylistic and structural grounds (Fig. 5) can be traced only to recent ownership in California collections. The cherry and mahogany pier table (Fig. 7) formerly was in the collection of the late Geraldine Rockefeller Dodge, but its inscription passed unrecognized in the catalogue of the Dodge sale. The low chest of drawers (Fig. 3) first appeared in January, 1965, when advertised by a Massachusetts dealer in *Antiques*.

Fortunately, the provenances of the other Shearer works present more explicit historical information. The desk-and-bookcase (Fig. 1) has three inscriptions that identify the original owner. Written in pencil on the back of the large central drawer is "By Shearer to Mr. Pendleton / 1801"; on the underside of the writing surface appears "Shearer for Even"; and on the back of the desk section an inscription in black paint that reads "E. Pendleton / Winchester." Thus it is evident that the desk-and-bookcase was made for an Evan (or Even) Pendleton in Winchester, Virginia. This prominent Shenandoah Valley center is located about twenty miles southwest of Martinsburg. Although this Mr. Pendleton almost certainly was a member of a large and prominent Virginia family, his precise identity has yet to be established.

The straight-front chest of five tiers of drawers (Fig. 2) was purchased in Martinsburg by a dealer about 1962 or 1963; it had descended in a family of that locale for at least four generations.<sup>9</sup> As will be noted later, there is intriguing circumstantial evidence that this chest of drawers may have been owned by John Shearer.

The walnut pier table (Fig. 6) has two inlaid and inscribed medallions that identify both the maker and the original owner, one Elizabeth Filler. Possibly the wording "Miss Elizabeth Filler / Fame to Virt<sup>u</sup>" may be construed as a personal compliment from the cabinetmaker, in addition to being a mark of ownership. This table descended through generations of the Mann family of the Lovettsville area in Loudon County, Virginia; a Filler family also lived in this vicinity.<sup>10</sup> It may be noted that Lovettsville is located about twenty-five miles southeast of Martinsburg.



*Figure 6. Serpentine-front pier table with two inscribed, inlaid medallions, one stating "By Shearer of Ed<sup>m</sup>boro—Fame To Mars" and the other reading "Miss Elizabeth Filler—Fame to Virtue." This table probably dates c. 1800. Walnut primary wood; there are no secondary woods. 29" HOA, 38 5/16" WOA, 18" DOA. Private collection. MESDA research file 7359.*

Presenting a complex and rather problematical provenance is the desk with an armorial type of inlay on the fall lid (Fig. 4). Once in the collection of William Randolph Hearst, this desk was sold in New York from that collection in November, 1938. The sale catalogue stated that the desk had been found in Philadelphia in the late 1870s by Dr. William Kent Gilbert's sister; it had previously belonged to some "colored servants who had received it from the Washingtons."<sup>11</sup> This desk has two inscribed inlays that would seem to identify its early or original ownership. Incised on an inlaid panel on the top drawer are the lines "Presented by / Rorbert Mc Farland" [*sic*]. Beneath the oval with lion rampant on the fall lid is an eagle-inlaid shield with a dependent curved panel inscribed "John Custis." The transitional Chippendale-Federal style of the desk precludes even the possibility that it was made for John Custis, the father of Daniel Parke Custis, who was Martha Washington's first husband. Indeed, the desk seems to date later than the lifespan of Martha



*Photograph by J. P. Herr.*

*Figure 7. Serpentine-front pier table inscribed in pencil beneath the top "John Shearer/Joiner From/Edinburgh." This table probably dates c. 1800. The legs are mahogany, and the top and skirt are cherry; there are no secondary woods. 30 1/16" HOA, 32 1/4" WOA, 17 1/8" DOA. —Private collection.*

Washington's son, John Parke Custis. Further, the inlay techniques, color, and lettering on the eagle shield and the "John Custis" panel differ from all other inlays on the desk, suggesting that they might be a later addition. Indeed, an inlaid loop at the base of the oval inlaid with the lion rampant implies the existence of an earlier inlay that was removed and replaced by the shield with eagle and the "John Custis" panel.<sup>12</sup> Several candidates could be identified as the Robert McFarland who evidently gave the desk as a gift; he might be the Robert McFarland who moved from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, to Bedford County, Virginia, about 1757, or a member of his family.<sup>13</sup> Another prominent McFarland family, intermarried with the Lewis family, lived in the vicinity of Staunton, Virginia, in



the last quarter of the eighteenth century.<sup>14</sup> Obviously, this desk presents many yet unanswered questions.

In total, the inscriptions and histories of the John Shearer pieces already give some of the basic biographical information about the cabinetmaker. Evidently he was an adult working in or near Martinsburg, West Virginia, between 1800 and 1806. The general transitional Chippendale-to-Federal style of most of the pieces implies that the broader span of his working period might be about 1790 to 1810. Although Shearer's orientation appears to have been in the Martinsburg region, his clients lived as far away as Winchester, Virginia, and Loudon County, Virginia. Most surprising, the inscriptions leave no doubt that Shearer harbored strong, but secretive, Tory political feelings.

As Shearer had been hitherto overlooked in published references on American cabinetmakers, so, too, he was notable only in his absence from the published histories of Berkeley County, West Virginia. His name was never mentioned in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century newspapers from the Martinsburg area. None of the local historians in Martinsburg had ever heard of John Shearer, and the family name has now disappeared from Berkeley County. However, research in primary sources, plus the recent discovery of a collateral descendant of John Shearer living in Texas, have securely identified John Shearer (1765-1810) as the son of Archibald and Sarah Shearer, who lived at Falling Waters on the Potomac, north of Martinsburg.

According to long-standing tradition in the line of Archibald Shearer's son, Thomas, the family left Scotland and settled in Berkeley County (then part of Frederick County) shortly before the beginning of the Revolutionary War.<sup>15</sup> Archibald Shearer (1732-1800) may have been the son of a John Shearer who died in Berkeley County about 1777.<sup>16</sup> He married Sarah Prather (1739-1805), and had a family numbering at least fourteen children.<sup>17</sup> Archibald Shearer owned a total of several thousand acres of land in both Berkeley County, Virginia, and Washington County, Maryland; he kept his residence at Falling Waters on the Potomac, where he owned mills and a distillery. Evidently he was a Presbyterian, for he and most of his family were buried in the now-abandoned Presbyterian graveyard near Falling Waters. In the last quarter of the eighteenth century, he appears to have been one of the richest inhabitants of Berkeley County, although he never held public office after the Revolu-

tion. In his will, made January 31, 1800, he designated his son John as one of the two executors of his estate and left to him "all that tract of land in Maryland which I purchased of Jack, Ross & Ringgold with its appurtenances." Archibald Shearer's estate inventory, taken April 25, 1800, included some relatively expensive furniture and twelve slaves with a total value of £1325.<sup>18</sup>

Aged about thirty-five at the time of his father's death, John Shearer probably moved to the lands which his father had purchased as early as 1778 in Washington County, Maryland.<sup>19</sup> The tracts, known as "Jack's Bottom" and "Additions to Jack's Bottom," were located along the Potomac River, near Williamsport, Maryland. It is likely that John Shearer married his wife, Mary Ann, some time between 1800 and 1805. However, he evidently maintained close ties on the south side of the Potomac River, for he was taxed on land in Berkeley County in 1802, and was involved in the settlement of his mother's estate in 1805.<sup>20</sup>

On January 2, 1810, John Shearer made his will in Washington County. He mentioned no trade, and left all his estate to his wife and his only son, Henry, then a minor. The wording of the will indicates that Shearer was seriously ill; he did not long survive, for letters to his estate were issued on March 9, 1810.<sup>21</sup> The inventory of his estate, taken March 29, 1810, listed no joiner's tools and very few farming implements; it provided a few signs of material well-being, including six silver tablespoons, twelve silver teaspoons, and two pairs of silver sugar tongs.<sup>22</sup> Possibly Shearer had retired to live from the income of his inherited lands. A reference in his estate account of November 24, 1811, to "Shop rent" at least implies an earlier period of activity.<sup>23</sup>

John Shearer's only son, Henry, died as a minor some time before August 30, 1824. His widow died shortly before March 22, 1825, having made a will on November 19, 1824. In this document, she left to "Martha Ross a woman of couler" the "Beurau which is now at the widow Jacobs Friends and also the bedstead."<sup>24</sup> It is intriguing to associate this "Beurau" inherited by "a woman of couler" in 1825 with the chest of five tiers of drawers (Fig. 2), which was owned by a black family named Fox in the Martinsburg area for at least four generations. This is the sole item having even a plausible argument to be considered as one of John Shearer's possessions.

Many factors support the identification of this John Shearer (1765-1810) as the cabinetmaker. He is the only "John

Shearer'' who can be placed in the Martinsburg area between 1790 and 1810. Although he is never termed a joiner or cabinet-maker on any extant tax lists from Berkeley County in the period between 1790 and 1810, it appears that these lists generally did not mention trades. Unfortunately, no tax lists from Washington County, Maryland, dating between 1800 and 1810 are known to survive. John Shearer's signature on furniture, whether written on interior surfaces or incised in inlay (Figs. 8

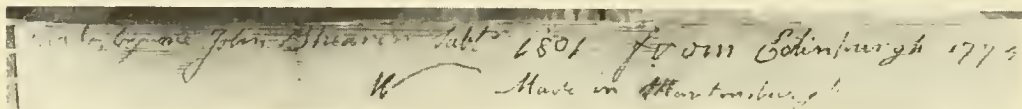


Figure 8. Detail of inscription on the back of a drawer of the desk-and-bookcase illustrated in Figure 1.



Figure 9. Detail of the Shearer inscription incised on the inlay of the pier table illustrated in Figure 6.

and 9) is consistent. Comparison of these signatures to that on the 1810 will (Fig. 10) reveals some generalized similarities but betrays a less precise hand in the will. However, since Shearer evidently signed the will on his deathbed, a faltering hand can be expected. The inscriptions reading, "From Edinburgh—1775" may be interpreted to mean that Sarah Shearer and her children came to America several years after the arrival of Archibald Shearer; this pattern of settlement can be traced in many American families. Finally, it is John Shearer's statement



of Tory allegiance that clinches the identification. There remains in the vicinity of Falling Waters a strong tradition that the Archibald Shearer family held a secret loyalty to the crown, and this fact is confirmed in the unpublished Shearer family genealogy.<sup>25</sup>

I Testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand & affixed my seal the 2nd day of January in the year of our Lord One thousand Eight hundred ten  
Signed sealed published & declared by John Shearer  
at the City of Baltimore

Figure 10. The signature on the will made by John Shearer in Washington County, Maryland, on January 2, 1810. Reproduced from the original will at the Hall of Records, Annapolis, Maryland.

Stylistic analysis of the Shearer pieces may be divided into considerations of general style, form, ornament, and design sources. An overview of these works places the majority in an individualistic transitional Chippendale-to-Federal style. Only the low chest of drawers (Fig. 3) has no Federal influence. On the two pier tables, the new Federal style has influenced the form through the use of the tapered legs terminating in tall spade feet (Figs. 6 and 7). On the other pieces, the overall form remains in the Chippendale style, while the ornament reveals the influence of the Federal style. Carved swags of drapery on the capitals of the quarter columns of the chest with five tiers of drawers bespeak the influence of neoclassicism (Fig. 2), as they also do on the attributed desk (Fig. 5). Otherwise, the neoclassical influence is evident in the inlays of swags, pendant bellflowers, medallions, and thin, wavy lines (Figs. 1, 4, 5, 6, and 20).

A general stylistic peculiarity that seems to mark the Shearer pieces is the unusual placement of hardware. Notable is the vertical placement of the brasses on both the desk-and-bookcase (Fig. 1) and the desk with the armorial type of inlay on the fall lid (Fig. 4). On the low chest of drawers (Fig. 3) the hardware is set near the sides of the drawers, and this placement was utilized originally on the three large drawers of the chest with five tiers of drawers (Fig. 2).

Another unusual stylistic quality of the Shearer furniture appears in the completely finished and scalloped backboards of the two pier tables (Figs. 14 and 15). Although the shaping is different on the two illustrated examples, the use of repeated C-shaped curves is similar. Perhaps this treatment indicates that these tables were intended to serve secondary functions as free-standing furniture.

In basic form, all but one of the Shearer pieces repeat the same serpentine-front with squared or blocked corners; only the chest with five tiers of drawers has a plain straight front. This serpentine form always terminated in paired concavities on the top drawer; hence the likeness to blockfront furniture is increased. Where the serpentine-front pieces employ an ogee bracket foot (Figs. 3 and 4), the base molding is omitted from the central, serpentine section; thus, the vertical unity of the foot and the blocked corner section is strengthened. On the two pieces with claw-and-ball feet (Figs. 1, 5, and 16) a more decorative and sculptural effect is achieved.

Ornament on the Shearer furniture is both carved and inlaid. The carving on the capitals of quarter columns (Fig. 18) appears on two pieces (Figs. 2 and 5). The chevron design that ornaments the base sections of the quarter columns of the chest with five tiers of drawers (Fig. 19) may be similar to gouge carving found on Federal period woodwork in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and the Shenandoah Valley. A favored carved motif is the pierced quatrefoil that ornaments the fronts of the pier tables (Figs. 6 and 7), and the pull-out supports for the fall lids of the desk-and-bookcase and the desk with the armorial type of inlay on the fall lid (Fig. 17). Of architectural inspiration is the very bold egg-and-dart molding which constitutes part of the cornice of the desk-and-bookcase (Fig. 1). More whimsical is the central carved anchor motif on this molding, the pierced tympanum of the pediment, and the unusual carved side finials. Bold carving typifies the execution of the claw-and-ball feet which support the desk-and-bookcase and the attributed desk (Fig. 16); the stylized shell-like devices on the heavy knees of these feet are noteworthy.

Inlays adorn four of Shearer's works; the favored surfaces for this form of ornamentation are the fall lids of the desks (Fig. 20). With slight variations, all three fall lids bear similar designs of inlaid swags of drapery with heavy pendant bellflowers. Chain-like formations and inlaid wavy lines frequently appear.



Figure 11. Interior of the desk section of the desk-and-bookcase illustrated in Figure 1.

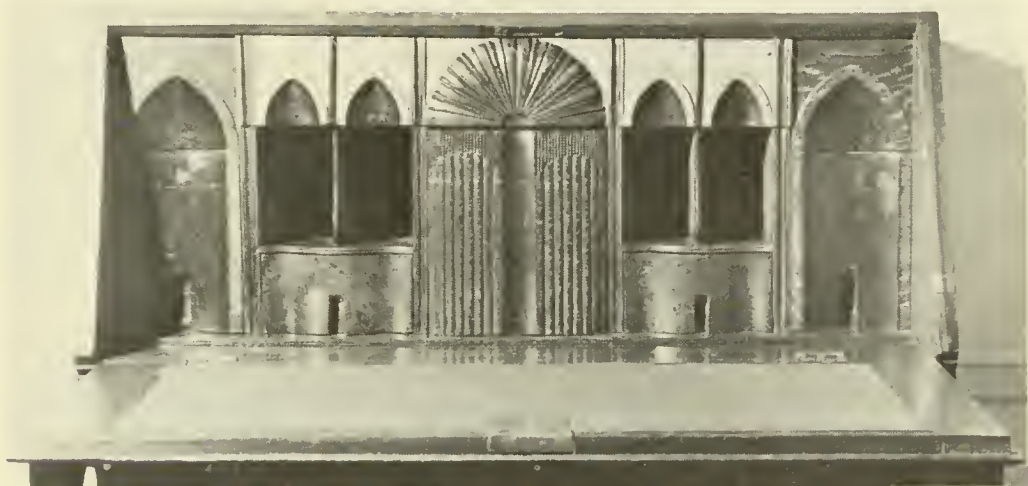


Figure 12. Interior of the desk illustrated in Figure 4.



Figure 13. Interior of the desk illustrated in Figure 5.



Shearer's practice of incising his name and inscriptions on inlaid panels or medallions is unusual. As was noted before, the crowned lion inlaid on the desk (Fig. 4) again bespeaks Tory orientation. The motif of the inlaid mask appears three times on the desk with the armorial type of inlay on the fall lid (Fig. 4) and is related to the winged faces that ornament the medallions on the skirt of the Elizabeth Filler pier table (Fig. 9).<sup>26</sup>

Through the combined use of carving, inlays, and multi-colored woods, Shearer created elaborate and complex desk interiors. The finest of all his desk interiors is that of the desk-and-bookcase (Fig. 11), which boasts a combination of shell-carved niches, a large top drawer ornamented with two carved convex shells, fluted pilasters, step-fluted sliding tambours, and colored oval paterae. Particularly notable are the architectural details, including the simulated voussoirs with keystones that enframe the two lateral drawers with concave shell carving; the small console brackets beneath these drawers, and the simulated masonry enframing the concavities of the drawers beneath the pigeonholes complement this theme. Although different in total design, the interior of the attributed desk (Fig. 13) repeats these simulated voussoirs with central keystones. Here the six



*Figure 14. Back of the pier table made for Elizabeth Filler illustrated in Figure 6.*



*Figure 15. Back of the pier table illustrated in Figure 7.*

pigeonholes are crowned with small drawers, each bearing a concave carved shell. The combination of fluted pilasters, tambours, and engaged fluted columns accentuates the other details of architectural inspiration. Without inlays, the interior of the desk with the armorial type of decoration on the fall lid achieves variety in color by means of a combination of natural birch and ebonized oak (Fig. 12). The central convex shell crowns a removable section whose bowed front is embellished with reeding. Unusual features include the Gothic arches and the vertical depressions in drawers which serve in the place of applied hardware.

Apparently Shearer drew his inspiration not from printed sources but rather from acquaintance with other pieces of furniture. The stylistic attributes of the seven pieces discussed here suggest that cabinetwork from three areas influenced Shearer: Virginia, inland Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island. The ornamented quarter-columns relate to other cabinetwork from the



*Figure 16. Detail of claw-and-ball foot on the desk section of the desk-and-bookcase illustrated in Figure 1.*



*Figure 17. Detail of the pierced pull-out support for the fall lid of the desk-and-bookcase illustrated in Figure 1.*

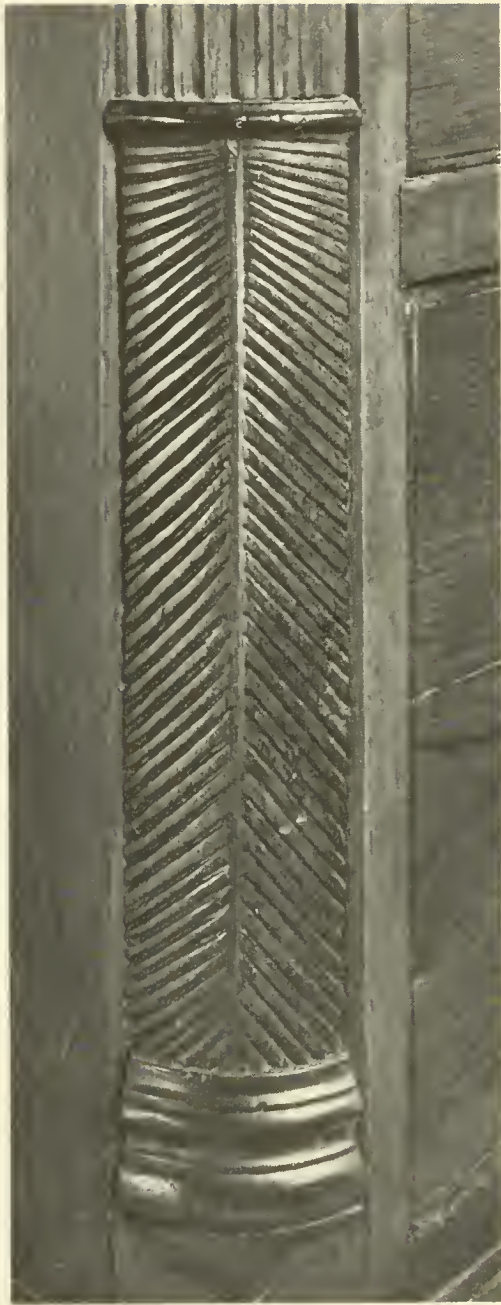
area of Winchester, Virginia (Figs. 18 and 19). In form, the old claw-and-ball feet may be likened to those encountered on mid-eighteenth-century furniture from Williamsburg, Virginia. Gothic elements, as seen in the desk interior, also have parallels in Williamsburg cabinetwork.<sup>27</sup>

In both scale and drawer arrangement, the chest with five tiers of drawers is reminiscent of furniture from the counties of inland Pennsylvania (Fig. 2). Also akin to Pennsylvania cabinetwork is the form of the ogee bracket feet (Figs. 3, 4). The coun-





*Figure 18. (Left) Detail of the carved capital of a quarter column on the chest of drawers illustrated in Figure 2.*



*Figure 19. (Right) Detail of the base section of a quarter column on the chest of drawers illustrated in Figure 2.*

ties of Chester, Lancaster, and Cumberland in Pennsylvania exerted considerable influence on the culture of the Shenandoah Valley.

Quite unexpected is the apparent influence of Rhode Island furniture evident in most of the Shearer pieces. The serpentine-



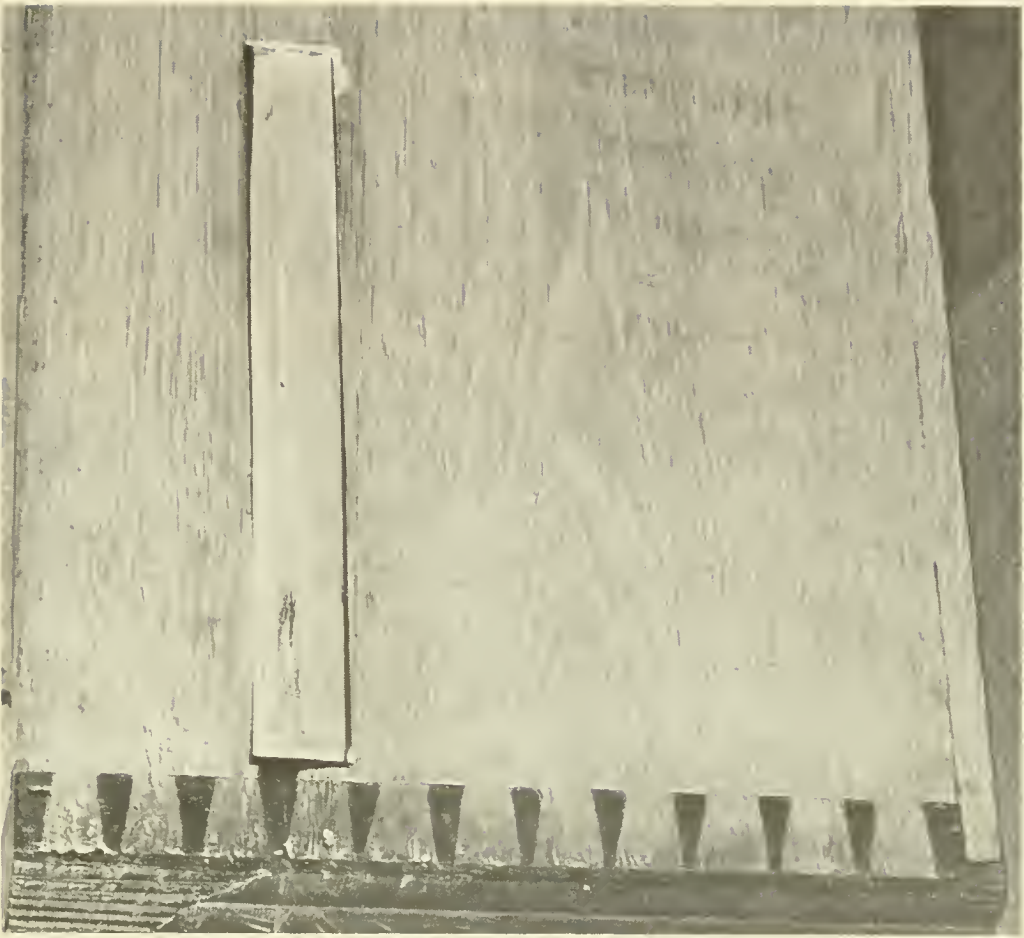


*Figure 20. Detail of the inlaid fall lid of the desk section of the desk-and-bookcase illustrated in Figure 1.*

front form with blocked corners, and even the position of shells on desk interiors, are reminiscent of blockfront pieces from Rhode Island and New London County, Connecticut.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, the form of the two Shearer pier tables, with serpentine curve to the skirt, frame, and top, and with blocked corners, is found elsewhere in American furniture only in card tables usually attributed to the Goddard-Townsend cabinetmakers of Newport, Rhode Island. Whereas the routes of Virginia and Pennsylvania influence are apparent and expected, one can only speculate on the transmission of apparent Rhode Island influence to the northern Shenandoah Valley.

All the Shearer pieces reveal consistent structural practices. The favored primary woods are walnut and cherry; the favored secondary wood is hard pine. The furniture is extremely heavy, and possesses the characteristic “overconstruction” found frequently on pieces made in the counties of southeastern and south-central Pennsylvania. The bottoms of drawers are secured by large rose-headed nails. More unusual is the occasional use of screws where nails or pegs might be expected. Each drawer rests upon a mortised frame that entirely encircles the inside of the carcase of the piece. Dovetails, as seen in the central section of the desk with the armorial type of inlay on the fall lid (Fig. 21) are long, precisely formed, and regularly spaced. The angles and spacing of dovetails in the Shearer pieces are remarkably similar.

Structurally, the most complex of all the Shearer pieces is the desk-and-bookcase (Fig. 1). Each foot is shaped from a single block of wood, secured to the base by a massive iron brace (Fig. 22). The pediment slides forward from the top of the bookcase



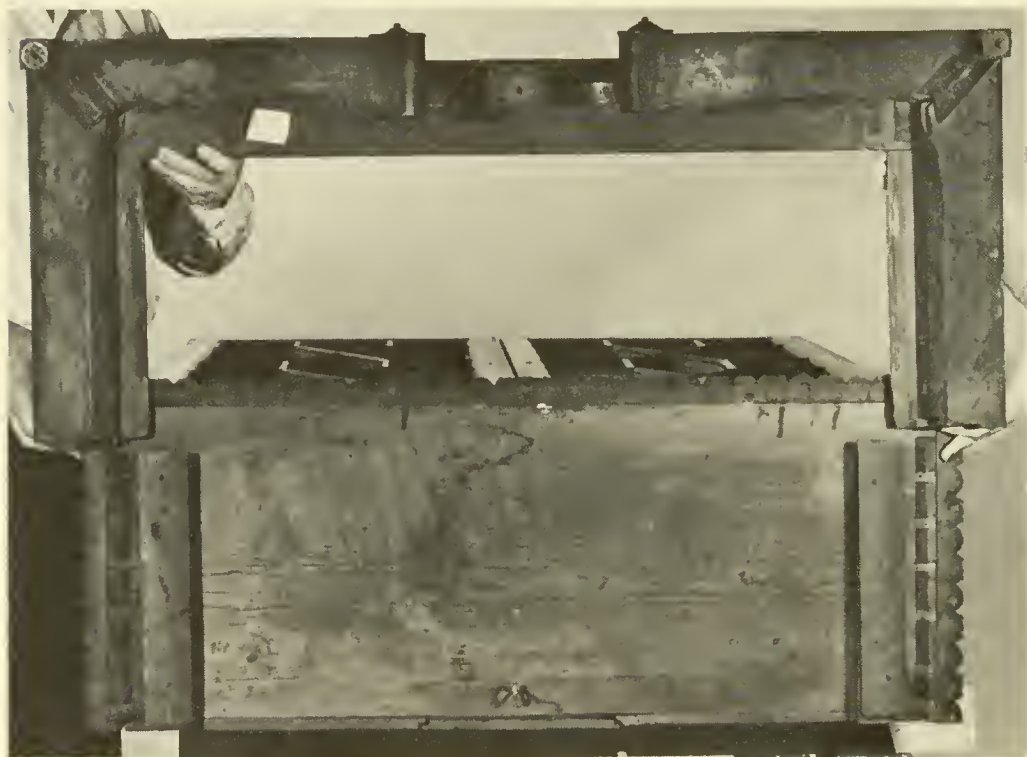
*Figure 21. Detail of the dovetails of the central section of the interior of the desk illustrated in Figure 4. The wooden locking device also should be noted.*



*Figure 22. Detail showing the construction of the feet in the desk section of the desk-and-bookcase illustrated in Figure 1.*

section (Fig. 23); it is held in place by two boards applied to the top.

Both John Shearer and his furniture share some of the same qualities: provinciality in origin but sophistication in outlook. With many questions remaining unanswered, John Shearer has at last achieved what was denied him in life, widespread recognition for his works, and the freedom to express his Tory beliefs.



*Figure 23. Detail showing the construction of the top and pediment of the bookcase section of the desk-and-bookcase illustrated in Figure 1.*

*Mr. Snyder, a Winterthur graduate and writer, lives in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.*



## NOTES

1. Sotheby Parke Bernet catalogue for sale number 4076, February 4, 1978, lot 1341. The desk-and-bookcase is illustrated in color.
2. Letter from Edward Knodle, Hagerstown, Maryland, to Mr. and Mrs. R. W. Tener, September 30, 1929. Courtesy of the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.
3. The majority of the most important of the numerous inscriptions on the desk-and-bookcase are discussed in the text. Enigmatic are inscriptions and a pencil drawing appearing on the interior surfaces of the large top drawer. The very faded drawing shows a figure almost certainly representing the devil with a pronged fork prodding a man who is saying "Never Rebel." Writing in this drawer includes the following lines: "Down with the Cropper (Croppes?) of Irland"; "Cropper (Croppes?) is Repenting, and his Master is Angry"; and "Shearer Even you dam<sup>d</sup> futers (?)." Both the drawing and the writings seem to express anti-Irish sentiments.
4. The inscriptions written in red crayon on this chest of five tiers of drawers appear on the underside of the top, and on interior surfaces of the three large drawers. There is illegible writing on the five smaller drawers in the top two tiers. A long but very worn pencil inscription appears on the exposed underside of the middle large drawer.
5. On this desk, the inscriptions appear on the interior surfaces of drawers and the underside of the writing surface.
6. It should be noted that Berkeley County, West Virginia, was Berkeley County, Virginia, before the War Between the States.
7. When this low chest of drawers was advertised in *Antiques* in January, 1965, the word "Martinsburgh" was read incorrectly as "Harrisburgh."
8. The town now called Edinburg formerly was often called Shryock. See Klaus Wust, *The Virginia Germans* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1969), p. 161.
9. Letter from Camden Ramsburg of New Market, Maryland, to John J. Snyder, Jr., December 26, 1972. Also, letter from Francis Silver, Martinsburg, West Virginia, to John J. Snyder, Jr., January 16, 1973.
10. Information courtesy of Frank Horton, letter of March 30, 1978.
11. William Randolph Hearst Sale Catalogue, Parke Bernet, New York, November 19, 1938, Lot 562.
12. Letter from Wallace Gusler, Williamsburg, Virginia, November 19, 1976.
13. William H. Egle, *Notes and Queries*, Third Series, v. 2, (1896), pp. 119-122.
14. *Ibid.*, Fourth Series, v. 1, (1893), pp. 327-328.
15. Unpublished Shearer family genealogy, assembled c. 1900 by Mary Marshall Shearer. Courtesy of Mrs. Kenneth Rich, San Antonio, Texas, a descendant of John Shearer's brother, Thomas.
16. John Shearer Appraisement and Accounts 1777-1778, Book 1, p. 88, p. 89, and p. 139, Berkeley County Courthouse, Martinsburg, West Virginia.

17. From the unpublished Shearer genealogy, the will of Archibald Shearer, and extant tombstones both whole and fragmentary at Falling Waters, the following account of the children of Archibald and Sarah (Prather) Shearer may be outlined:
1. Elizabeth, born December 23, 1760; married 1783 to Alexander Porterfield.
  2. Catherine, born May 25, 1762; died October 27, 1828, unmarried.
  3. Martha (Patty) born September 13, 1763; married 1795 Jacob Towson; died January 6, 1824.
  4. John (subject of this article) born February 13 (or 11?), 1765; married Mary Ann ———; died 1810.
  5. Ann (Nancy) born September 11, 1766; married 1799 to Elias Oden (1769-1830); died March 16, 1836.
  6. Mary, born May 9, 1768; married ——— Klinger.
  7. Thomas, born July 19, 1769 (?); married Rachel Smith of Stevensburg, Virginia; living in the decade 1810-1820. Left descendants.
  8. James, born March 25, 1771; died October, 1836.
  9. Henry, born December 22, 1772; died c. 1808; unmarried.
  10. Archibald, born April 6, 1774; died c. 1819-1822; unmarried.
  11. Basil, born February 27, 1777.
  12. Samuel, born January 28, 1779.
  13. Sarah, born July 15, 1781; evidently died in infancy.
  14. Sarah (Sally?), born July 28, 1782; died aged 16 (?).

It should be noted that the name was spelled both "Shearer" and "Sheerer" in this period. Further, although it is likely that John Shearer (1765-1810) may have been buried at Falling Waters, no tombstone fragments of his stone may be found there. It is equally possible that he was buried in the vicinity of Williamsport, Maryland.

18. Archibald Shearer Will and Inventory, 1800, v. 3, p. 384, Berkeley County Courthouse, Martinsburg, West Virginia.
19. Deeds A-231 and EE-321, Washington County Courthouse, Hagerstown, Maryland.
20. Berkeley County Tax Lists, 1802; Sarah Shearer Will and Vendue List, v. 3, p. 720; both at Berkeley County Courthouse, Martinsburg, West Virginia.
21. John Shearer Will 1810, Washington County, Maryland. Original at Hall of Records, Annapolis, Maryland.
22. John Shearer 1810 Inventory, taken by John Hogg and Milton H. Sackett, Washington County Book D-158, Hall of Records, Annapolis, Maryland.
23. John Shearer Estate Accounts, Washington County Book 4, pp. 64-66, Hall of Records, Annapolis, Maryland.
24. Mary Ann Shearer Will 1825, Washington County, Maryland. Original at Hall of Records, Annapolis, Maryland.
25. Conversation with John Ziegler of Falling Waters, November, 1974. Also see Shearer genealogy (Note 17).

26. These mask motifs may ultimately be traced to widespread sources in Baroque art. Perhaps they are more than mere decoration on the Shearer pieces; they could be a symbolic allusion to his secret Tory identity.
27. Wallace B. Gusler and Sumpter Priddy III, "Furniture of Williamsburg and Eastern Virginia," *Antiques*, August 1978, pp. 282-293. Particularly relevant is the desk-and-bookcase illustrated there as Figure 5.
28. Ralph E. Carpenter, Jr., *The Arts and Crafts of Newport, Rhode Island, 1640-1820* (Newport: Preservation Society of Newport County, 1954), p. 95.

*I wish to acknowledge the assistance of Francis Silver of Martinsburg, John Ziegler of Falling Waters, and Mrs. Kenneth Rich of San Antonio, Texas.*

## *A School of Charleston, South Carolina Brass Andirons*

BRADFORD L. RAUSCHENBERG

Aside from a few marked American brass andirons, identification of unmarked examples is difficult and has been little approached by scholars of American decorative art. Awareness of a particular region is based upon marked examples, construction similarities, and histories of ownership. Variations of these regional characteristics reflect areas such as Baltimore, Boston, Newport, New York, and Philadelphia. To these areas can now be added Charleston, South Carolina. As a city recognized for its high style in the field of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century architecture, paintings, furniture, and silver, Charleston has now yielded its secret of two styles of brass andiron production: neoclassical and Empire.

This recognition of a school of Charleston brass andirons has been approached with caution. The conception of Charleston as a center with a regional style of brass andirons developed during the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts' Field Research Program in coastal South Carolina.<sup>1</sup> The frequent recognition of neoclassical (Figs. 1-12) and Empire (Figs. 13-15) examples in private homes and collections, each with Charleston family histories and similar construction characteristics peculiar to the two styles, suggested local production. This hypothesis now becomes a theory with the discovery of similar examples in collections around the United States, these also with histories of



being acquired in Charleston. Further strengthening this theory, Charleston newspapers contain many advertisements of braziers and brass founders, the latter advertising brass and iron production.<sup>2</sup>

Before the Charleston school of brass production is discussed the two styles of andirons need to be identified as objects, each with its own characteristics and relationships to others of the



*Figure 1. Philadelphia-Charleston, Neoclassical Group I, brass andirons, ca. 1780-85. 30½" HOA. Private collection.*

same style. Of the two styles, neoclassical and Empire, the neoclassical should be discussed first in deference to chronology and style development.

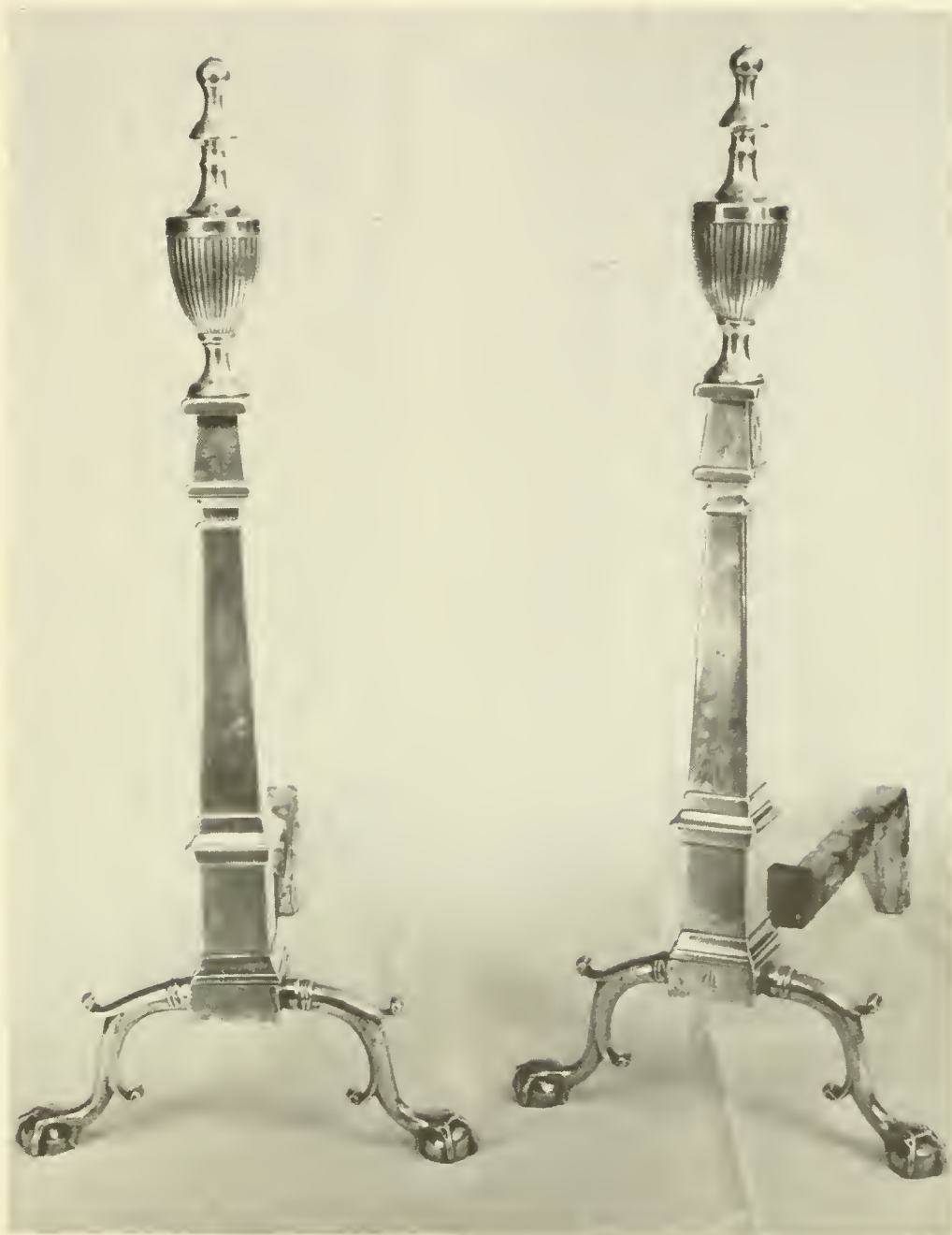
The change from Chippendale to neoclassical design in andirons is seldom pure. Elements of neoclassicism or Adam style gradually appear. In Charleston andirons, Chippendale elements persist to circa 1800. In the neoclassical style of Charleston andirons it will be seen that certain features remain constant. Primary among these is an obelisk-like shape of the shaft which may be viewed as a reversed neoclassical furniture leg (Figs. 1-11).

Secondly, the plinth or bottom element of the shaft sits on top of the base or legs (Figs. 4-11). For the purpose of this article, the neoclassical style of Charleston-made brass andirons will be divided into three chronological groups of style development: I, 1780-1790 (Figs. 1-3); II, 1785-1800 (Figs. 4-7); and III, 1790-1805 (Figs. 8-12).

Group I consists of three pairs similar in base construction. The ball and claws have well defined knuckles, separated and vertical Philadelphia claws, inside and outside leg spurs, molded legs at a point where they engage the plinth, and a drop-angle billet bar (log rest), all characteristics seen in Philadelphia.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, the tight relationship between these andirons, when viewed with groups II and III, reveal the strong possibility of a Philadelphia-to-Charleston transition group.

Figure 1 is the earliest of the Philadelphia-to-Charleston type in that the shafts and heads (urns with finials) are fluted and the middle element in the finial is gadrooned. The capital of the shaft has a middle division above the fluting, which is beaded. There is no engraving as is seen in Figure 2 and later examples. A probable date for these could be 1780-85.<sup>4</sup>

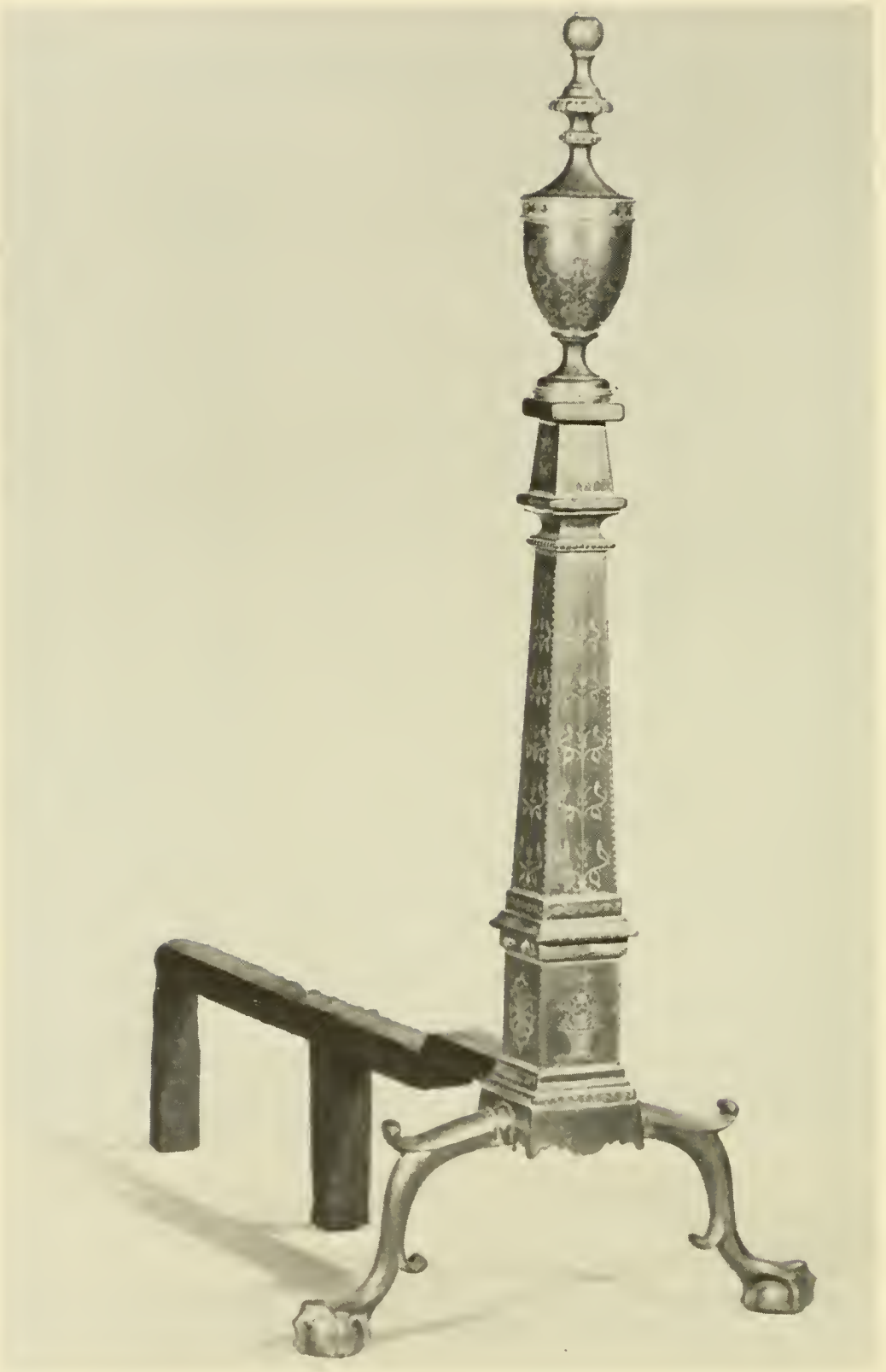
Figure 2 exhibits a reeded head and smooth shaft. Above the medial molding of the shaft can be seen engravings of patera, husks, and vines. Below the medial molding, on the surface of the pedestal (square element above plinth), can be found an eagle with outspread wings over which are rays and thirteen stars. Though polishing has almost removed this motif, its discovery is unique to this pair within groups I, II, and III.<sup>5</sup> This symbol certainly denotes the early federal period. The earliest flag usage of the eagle and thirteen stars is 1784.<sup>6</sup> Indian peace medals of this period and until 1795 also show this motif.<sup>7</sup> One



*Figure 2. Philadelphia-Charleston, Neoclassical Group I, brass andirons, ca. 1785-1790. 30½"HOA. Private collection.*

might attribute these andirons as being early in this period of the new nation.

The andirons in Figure 3<sup>8</sup> retain the gadrooning on the finial as in Figure 1. The stylized engraving is unique to this pair and exhibits inventiveness with a French-like basket of flowers,<sup>9</sup> vines and tulip-like flowers. Below the capital of the shaft is a beaded edge which was seen in Figure 1.



*Figure 3. Philadelphia-Charleston, Neoclassical Group I, brass andirons, ca. 1785-1790. 30 $\frac{3}{4}$ " HOA, 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ " WOA. Collections of Greenfield Village and Henry Ford Museum, Acquisition Number 30.958.292.*



Again, note the construction feature of Group I: the legs make their junction *into* the plinth. Groups II (Figs. 4-7) and III (Figs. 8-12) possess a remarkable variation to the pattern of Group I (Figs. 1-3). The plinth is a separate element sitting on top of the base. Group II have cabriole legs. Group III have gothic-like bases. This structural change could well indicate a new technique, another brass foundry, a change of ownership, or perhaps the end of the aforementioned Philadelphia-to-Charleston transition period. This could also indicate a style influence or craftsman migration. At this point the positive origin of Group I is uncertain.

The solid recognition of Groups II and III as a Charleston school is supported by their having, for the most part, Charleston histories of ownership. Group I have unknown histories. Group II, along with Group III, has the plinth atop the base, a less defined ball-and-claw with a more horizontal side claw (Fig. 6b) and only outside spurs, all important variations from Group I, and where histories are known, they have South Carolina connections.

Of Group II, Figure 4<sup>10</sup> returns to the reeded head and patera of Figure 2 and introduces a unique paneled shaft. The design source for this shaft pattern could well be *The II<sup>d</sup> Edition of Genteel Household Furniture in the Present Taste . . .* by the Society of Upholsteres [*sic*], Cabinet-Makers, &c., which was published in London between 1760 and 1763.<sup>11</sup> In this design book, plate 105 illustrates "Ornaments to Grates for Burning Wood &c." Six "ornaments" are illustrated, one of which is quite similar to the portion of the shaft above the medial molding (Fig. 4b).

The boldness of this pair of andirons is unusual with the design reflecting the inventiveness of an unknown Charleston brass founder. These exhibit an engraved patera on the front of the tapering element, above the capital and below the head. Also, on the shaft above the medial molding, a six-pointed star is only on the front of the shaft. This star probably is a variation of the quatrefoil device shown in Figure 4b. Undoubtedly, the star seemed more appropriate in this 1785-1800 period.

Figures 1 through 4 illustrate a billet bar without a vertical pyramidal pointed "log-stop." The rest of Group II and III, with the exception of Figure 8, have these members. There is a strong possibility that these log-stops also served to retain coal grates. While no grate has been found, they were popular in



*Figure 4a. Charleston, Neoclassical Group II, brass andirons, ca. 1785-1800. 30½" HOA, 14 1/8" WOA. History of 1930 purchase from shop of William J. O'Hagan, antique dealer, Charleston, S. C. Courtesy of Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. Acquisition Number 1930-509,1-2.*

America and we know that coal and grates were available in Charleston at this point.

Figure 5a<sup>12</sup> also has the reeded head of Figures 2 and 4. With this example, the refined elegance of neoclassical engraving is well developed with patera, intertwining vines, fabric swags, and a unique inverted husk or bellflower between the legs (Fig. 5b). The shaft above the medial molding has obliquely finished

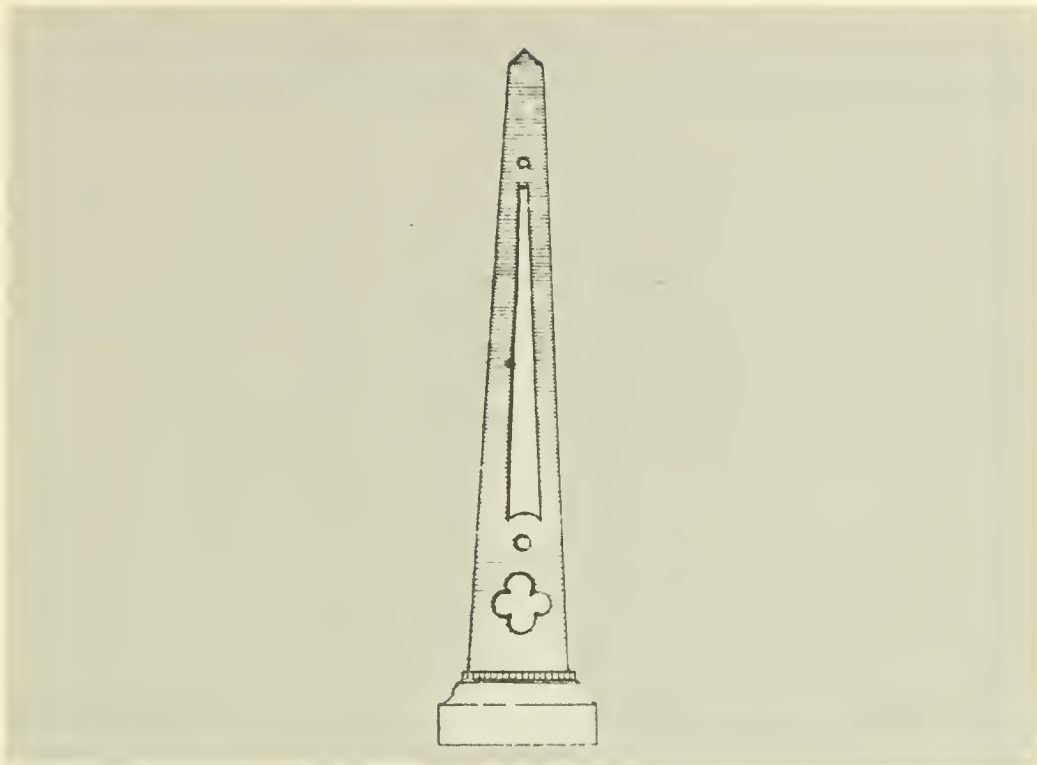


Figure 4b. Detail of plate 105, "Ornaments to Grates for Burning Wood &c.," Genteel Household Furniture by A Society of Upholsterers, Cabinet-makers, &c., London 176-. Courtesy, Henry Francis duPont Winterthur Museum Libraries.

corners engraved with linearly attached husks. Supporting the feet are square plates (also see Fig. 6) which apparently occur only in Charleston. It will be noticed that several plates are used in the construction of each andiron in Groups II and III. In Group II the plate is needed to support the plinth on the thin base. In Group III with the flat surfaced gothic base, the plate is unnecessary. The brass andirons in Figure 5 are supreme examples of the Charleston school and would undoubtedly be the best were it not for the apparent unique paktong pair in Figure 6a.

Paktong or tutenag is an alloy of copper, zinc, and nickel. Also known as white copper, paktong (pai-t'ung) is a Chinese invention, occasionally seen in grates, fenders, and candlesticks of English and European origin.<sup>14</sup> To the knowledge of the author there is not a marked example of American production. Nor has there ever been any serious research into the possibility of American production. However, the existence of the andirons illustrated in Figure 6a offers proof of Charleston production.<sup>15</sup> The author is not familiar with a single pair of English paktong



*Figure 5a. Charleston, Neoclassical Group II, brass andirons, ca. 1785-1800. 30" HOA, 14" WOA. Collections of Greenfield Village and the Henry Ford Museum, Acquisition Number 35.326.4.*





*Figure 5b. Detail of Figure 5a. Inverted husk or bellflower suspended from base plate below plinth. Engraving similar to lines of "scratch work" on Charleston husks and bellflowers.*

andirons. By this time, as a rule, English andiron production was unusual; the conversion to coal grates was complete in most homes. When viewed with other andiron examples in the Charleston school it is seen that all Charleston construction features are present. The high style Adam engraving justifies the special quality of the metal. Obviously, at the time of production style was paramount and cost was no object. Someone in Charleston demanded the best.

The quality of engraving in Figure 6a represents the hand of a professional, as well as all of Group I, II, and III. The business relationship of brass founders and engravers or silversmiths is



*Figure 5c. Detail of ivory husk or bellflower on door of Holmes secretary-bookcase, Charleston, ca. 1770. Compare with Figure 5b. Heyward-Washington House, Charleston Museum.*

unknown; however, the ever-present case for piece work is obvious.<sup>16</sup> During this period in Charleston the quality work of engravers and silversmiths is well known. Throughout Groups I, II, and III variations in engraving ability and style occur; therefore, the author is not suggesting the same hand executed all engravings. However, among several andirons the work is quite similar and suggests the same hand.



*Figure 6a. Charleston, Neoclassical Group II, paktong andirons, ca. 1785-1800. 28 7/8" HOA, 14 1/8" WOA. Courtesy of the Henry Francis duPont Winterthur Museum. Acquisition Number 61.1413.1,2.*

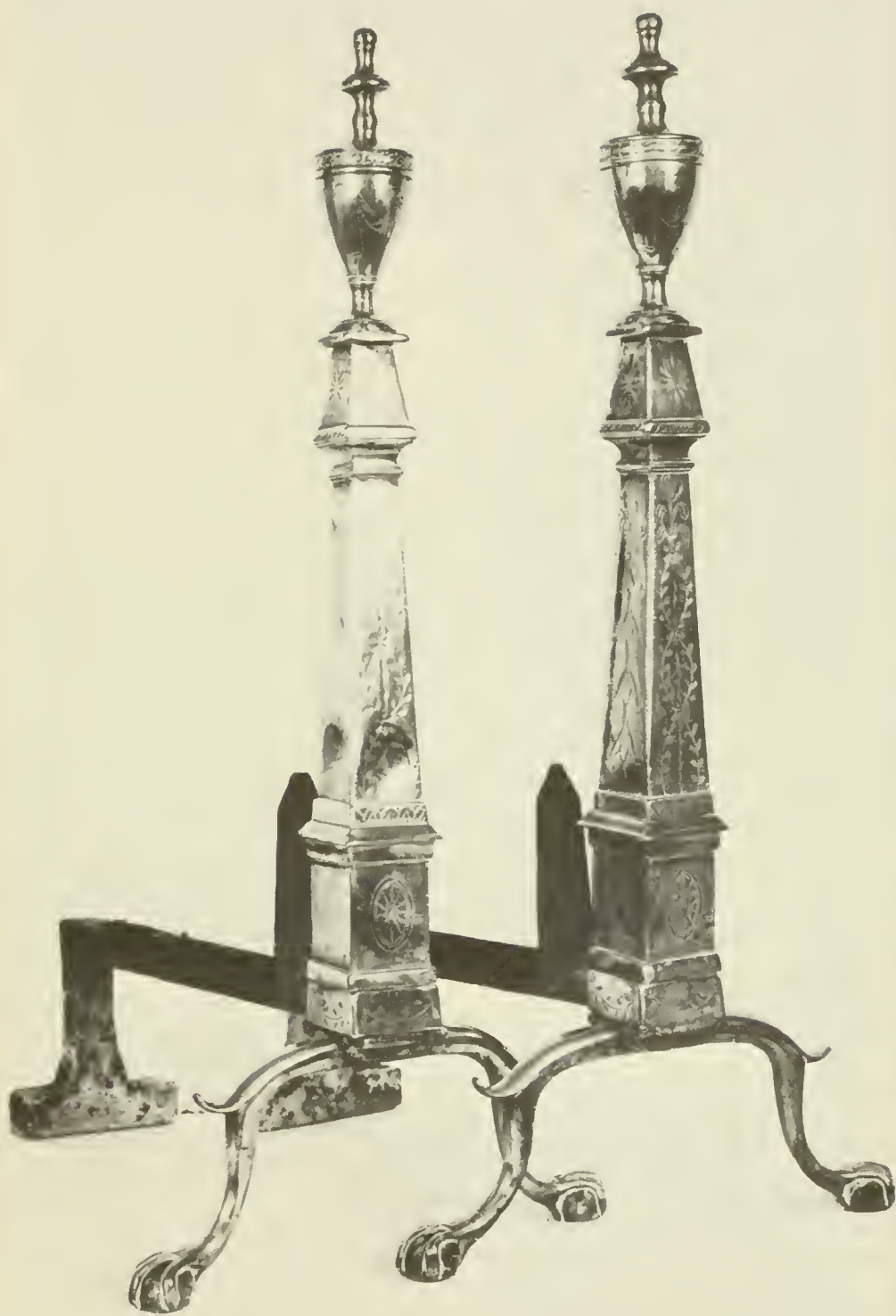
At this point in Group II it is important to consider a theory of the late Charles Montgomery concerning the role of the carver and turner as a specialist in preparing wooden patterns for the brass founder. Montgomery recognized a similarity between turned columns and ball-and-claw feet of Chippendale style furniture in Philadelphia and brass andirons from the same city.<sup>17</sup> This is apparently true to a limited extent in Charleston (Fig. 6b).

The brass andirons in Figure 7a demonstrate all the construction features of Figure 6a with the exception of the plates under the feet. On the sides of this pair are found linearly arranged husks, surmounted by a bow-knot (Fig. 7b), a feature often found in Group III. The swags of fabric on the heads have



*Figure 6b. Detail of Charleston paktong andirons ball-and-claw foot with Charleston mahogany tea table ball-and-claw. Similarity reflects carver producing pattern for brass founder. Compare also Figures 4 and 5.*

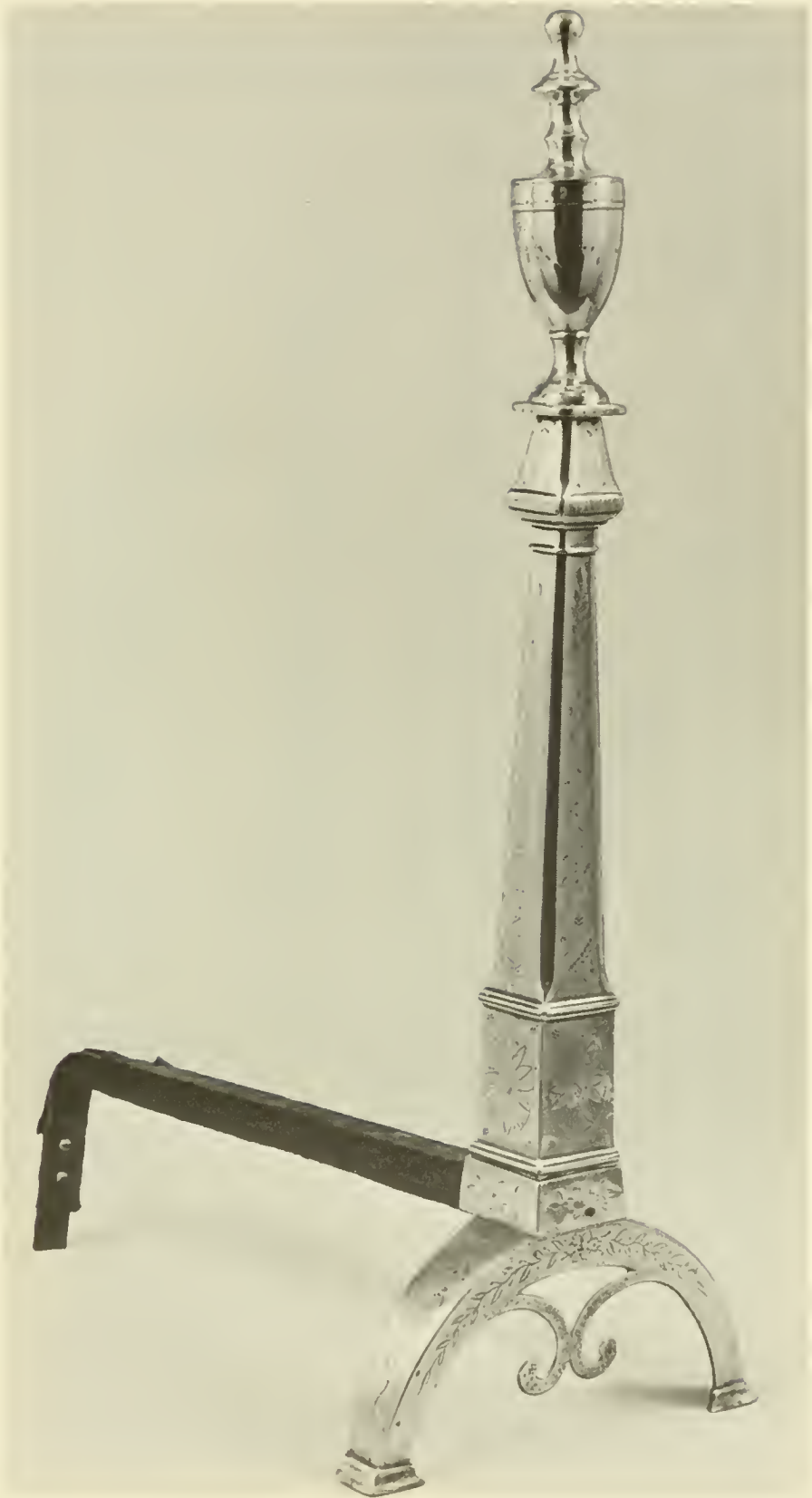




*Figure 7a. Charleston, Neoclassical Group II, brass andirons, ca. 1785-1800. 30½" HOA. Private collection.*



*Figure 7b. Detail of head and shaft of 7a.*



*Figure 8a. Charleston, Neoclassical Group III, brass andirons, ca. 1790-1805. 26 $\frac{1}{4}$ " HOA, 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ " WOA. History of Cheves, Middleton, or Kinlock families of Charleston. Private collection. MESDA research file S-9006.*



*Figure 8b. Detail of advertisement of C. W. Lyon, Inc., illustrating Charleston Group III brass andiron, ca. 1790-1805, 30" HOA. From The Magazine Antiques, August, 1951, p. 73.*



*Frets proper for Tea Stands, Trays and Fenders*

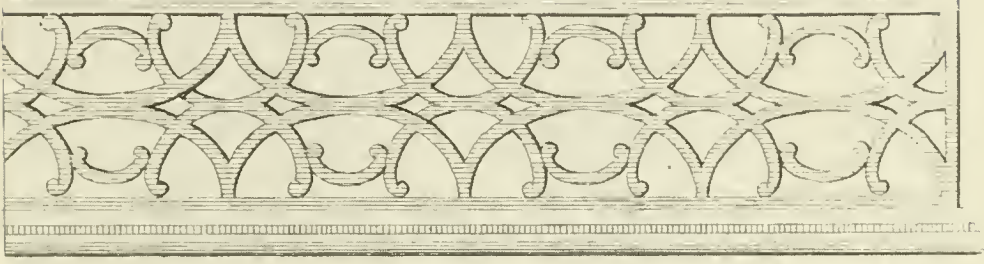


Figure 8c. Detail of plate 9, "Frets Proper for Tea Stands, Trays and Fenders," The Joyners and Cabinetmakers Darling, London, 1770. Courtesy of the Henry Francis duPont Winterthur Museum Libraries.

repeated those in the plinths of Figure 5. Upon close examination, many similar details in engraving design are repeated in Figures 2, 4, and 7, and in Group III.

Group III (Figs. 8-12) demonstrates the next period of chronological development and possibly a change in masters or foundries. Change is not always for the good and Group III may demonstrate a decline of design. It is possible that Group III illustrates another foundry, but, if so, identical constructional features were used. To the author, Group III is the same foundry as Group II but demonstrates a style change. The time factor for this change is difficult to determine, but about 1800 seems probable.

This style change or transition from Group II to III is demonstrated by Figures 8a<sup>19</sup> and 8b.<sup>20</sup> The reason for assigning the two pair as transition examples is that the opposing scrolls between the legs are probably vestigial of the inverted husk or bellflower (Fig. 5b). Figures 8a and 8b are positioned in this stage of the chronology because of the "underdeveloped" middle foot. Also the obliquely finished corners of the shafts (Figure 8a) have close ties with Figure 5 and its similarly finished corners. In summary, Figure 5 and Figures 8a and 8b have close design characteristics. However, as will be seen later in this study there is a base development (Fig. 12) in which the middle foot is no longer a design characteristic. Perhaps Figures 8a and 8b should be placed just before Figure 12, because in theory, the design is always the strongest at the time of introduction and weakens as time passes. However, have Figures 8a and 8b a weak or strong base design affinity to Figure 8c? The design for this gothic-like base is probably plate 9 of John Crunden's 1770 *The*



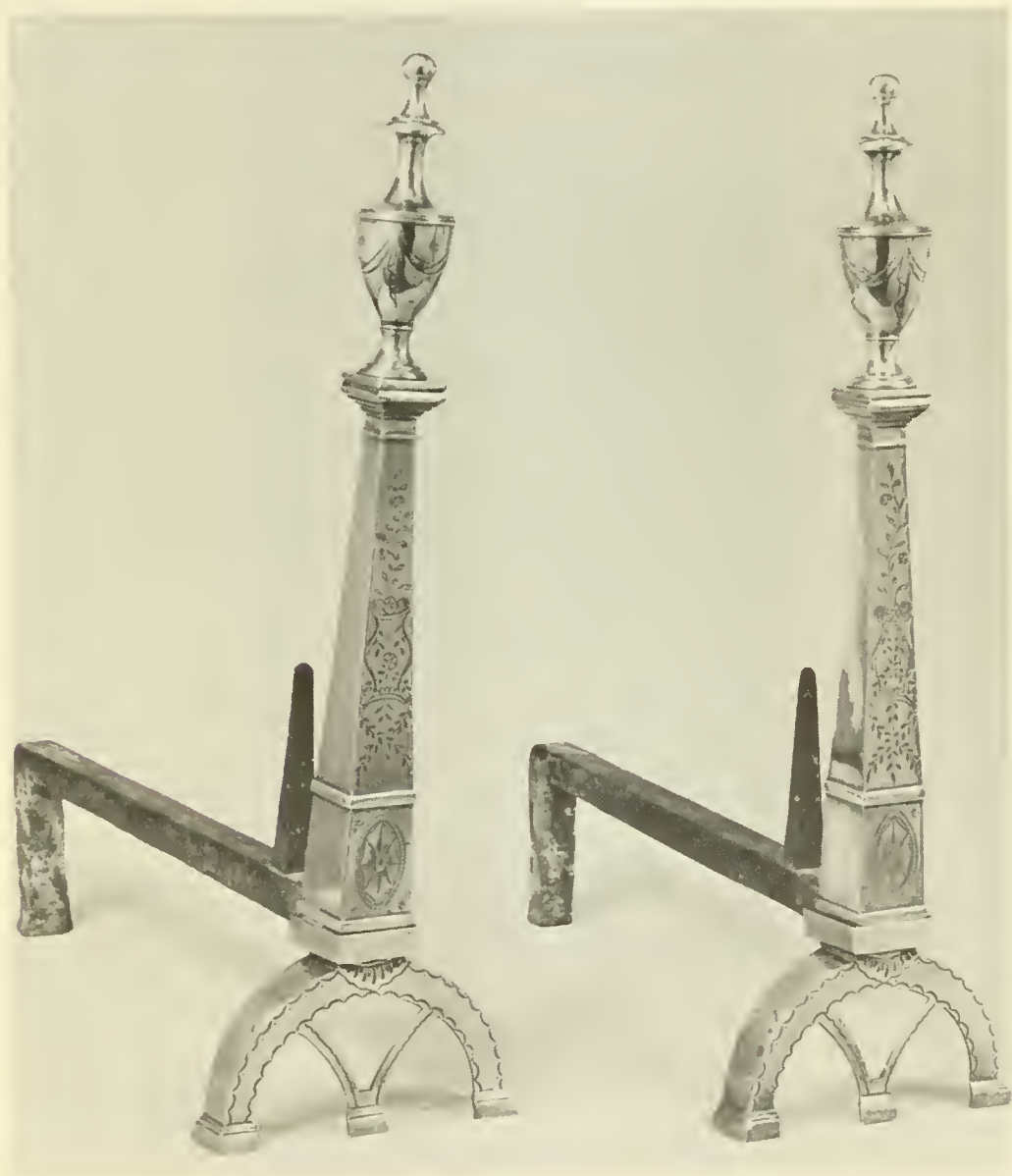
Figure 9. Charleston, Neoclassical Group III, brass andirons, ca. 1790-1805. 26 3/8" HOA, 8 3/4" WOA. Engraving on shafts is worn, but identical to 7b. History of descent from Henry Middleton. Middleton Place Foundation. MESDA research file S-8198.

*Joyner's and Cabinetmakers Darling.*<sup>21</sup> Figure 8c is half of Crunden's plate 9, which is entitled "Frets proper for Tea Stands, Trays and Fenders." As is seen, the bases of Group III follow this design, with Figs. 10-12 as a complete middle foot.

These transitional pairs (Figs. 8a and 8b) demonstrate engraving seen earlier such as swags of husks, on the head (Fig. 6a), and often repeated patera. However, the running laurel branch, separate or with vines, is a new element. The author ex-

amined Charleston engraved printed material and found that this device was not used before 1795.

It will be noticed that the medial molding in Figure 8a is small and unlike previous examples. This perhaps is another reason for placing Figures 8a and 8b later in this study; the evolution to a smooth shaft. Figure 8b demonstrates the normal medial molding of Groups I and II and Figure 9. Here Figure 9 might be placed before Figure 8 as it demonstrates the large medial molding common to Groups I and II. However, it is difficult to demonstrate chronology with so few examples.



*Figure 10a. Charleston, Neoclassical Group III, brass andirons, ca. 1790-1805. 25 3/8" HOA, 7 15/16" WOA. Middleton Place Foundation. MESDA research file S-9063.*



*Figure 10b. Detail of head.*

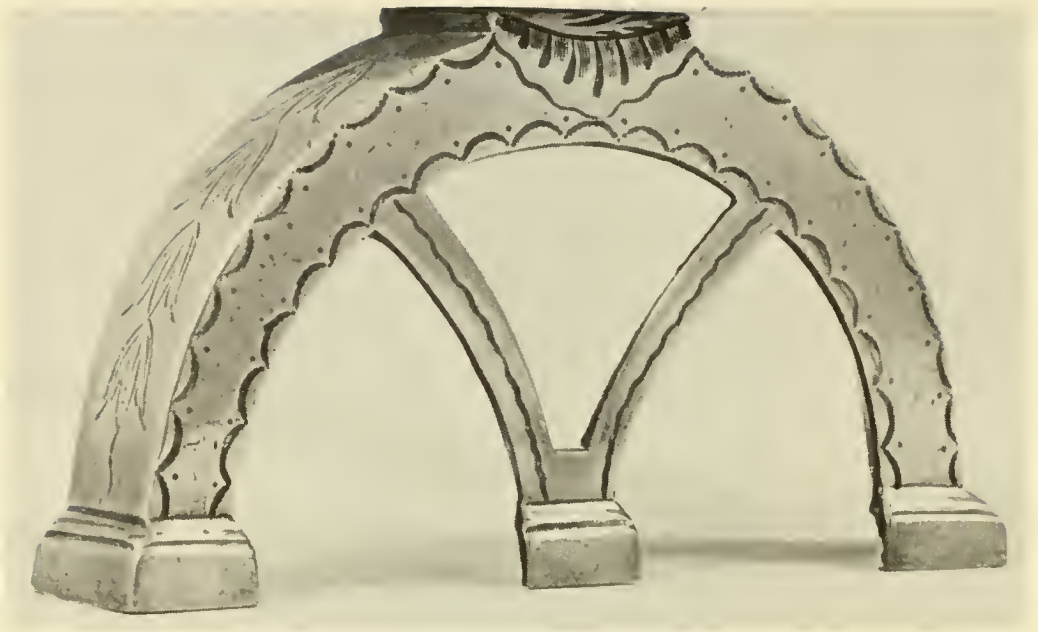




*Figure 10c. Detail of shaft.*

Figure 9 illustrates the full developed middle foot as was seen in design source (Fig. 8c). The engraving on the base is of the laurel branches as in Figure 8a. The engraver was not the same. The plinth is faced with the floral swag of the paktong pair (Fig. 6). The shaft is engraved with linear husks and intertwining vines identical to Figure 7. The swags on the head and the patera are again repeated as in Figures 7 and 10.

The two pairs in Figures 10<sup>23</sup> and 11<sup>24</sup> demonstrate less expensive andirons in that both are the shortest in Groups I, II, and III, and are engraved only on the front of the shaft in Figure 11. The shortness was accomplished by the elimination of the tapered element between the capital and head which was found in previous examples.



*Figure 10d. Detail of base.*

The engraving on Figure 10a repeats the fabric swags on the head (Fig. 10b), the patera and the linear husks, the latter identically to Figure 9 as on the side of the legs. Almost removed by polishing in Figure 9 was a Chippendale-like "ruffle" at the top of the base under the plinth. This can now be seen in the base in Figure 10d, which also is faced with edging much like bright-cut work on silver. The shaft (Fig. 10c) is engraved with a divergent style approaching the naivete' of Figure 3. The central motif is a hurricane-shade-shaped motif with flowers emerging from the top. This is unique to this pair but within the design framework of others illustrated.

The medial moldings on Figures 10 and 11 are small and reflect the design decay already mentioned with Figure 8a. Also, the finials of Figures 10 and 11 have eliminated the small turning above the head (Figs. 1-9) and now present a clean thrust upward.

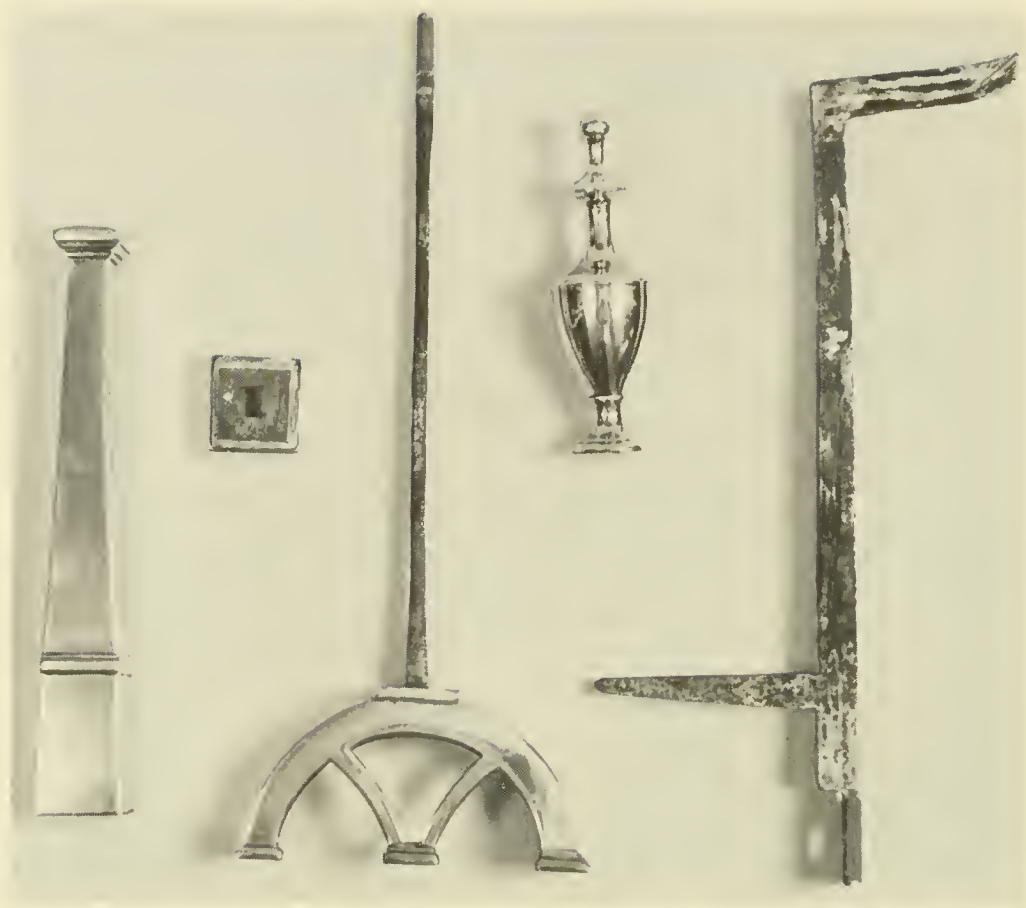
The engraving on the base of Figure 10c must have been a common design for a period; it has been seen on another pair of andirons and repeats on example 12. Figure 12a<sup>25</sup> illustrates an identical base (Figure 12c) with engraving as on Figure 10. The head has identical engraving and profile as in 10b. However, the shaft (Fig. 12b) is round and with a bow-knot engraved as in Figures 7b and 9. Apparently, a technical problem was encountered with the round shaft, as the plinth is missing and the



*Figure 11a. Charleston, Neoclassical Group III, brass andirons, ca. 1790-1805. 24½" HOA, 7¾" WOA. History of descent in W. M. Wallace family of Charleston, S. C. Private collection. MESDA research file S-8741.*

billet bar attaching plate shows. This transition to a round shaft announces the arrival of an early empire at the end of the first decade of the nineteenth century.

The neoclassical school (Groups I, II and III) of Charleston andirons are among the finest produced in America. The quality of these reflects well the neoclassical period of architecture still evident in Charleston. They must have aptly complemented a chimneypiece, with all of its neoclassical composition work, and brought the black hole of the fireplace opening alive with their majestic height, luster, and engraving.



*Figure 11b. Figure 11a disassembled.*

The transition in Charleston brass andirons during the turn of the century is best illustrated by Figure 12a. The discovery of this pair was most fortunate as the profile of its round shaft announces the transition to the pair illustrated in Figure 13a. This pair, complete with fender and one log stop finial, was found to be identical to a pair shown in an early work on Charleston architecture.<sup>26</sup> The andirons in Figure 13a possess a round shaft similar to Figure 12b. In the transition the shaft top necks in, with one ring turning and two at the bottom before they join the Empire base. Notice also the thickening of the neoclassical head (Fig. 13b) developing into a squatty Empire type as seen in Figure 14a. With the development of this base and head the transition to Empire is complete.

The survival of the almost complete pair illustrated in Figure 13 is apparently rare, for only two other sets of this Group IV were located, and they were missing the connecting fender. This fender (Fig. 13c) has two end vertical pins which attach into the





*Figure 12a. Charleston, Neoclassical Group III, brass andirons, ca. 1800-1810. 20½" HOA, — WOA. Note absence of middle foot and transition from square to round shaft. History of acquisition in Essex, Massachusetts. Private collection.*



*Figure 12b. Detail of base of 12a. Compare with Figure 10d. Note absence of plinth element allowing billet bar plate to show.*



Figure 13a. Charleston, Neoclassical-Empire Group IV, brass andirons with fender, 1810-15. 19" HOA, 22 $\frac{3}{4}$ " WOA with fender, 20" DOA with billet bar. Private collection. MESDA research file S-9257.

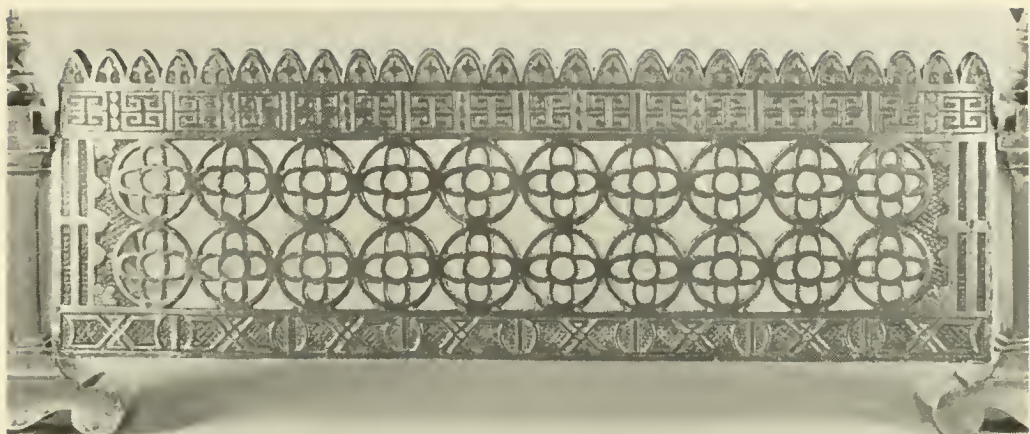
cast eyes on the andirons, a feature apparently unique to this group of Charleston origin.

The design elements on the fender (Fig. 13c) are similar to those seen in plates 28 and 101 of the 1808 publication, *A Collection of Designs for Household Furniture and Interior Decoration*, a London publication. This early nineteenth century design source was undoubtedly available in Charleston. Written by George Smith, it was the most important furniture design book in America in the first two decades of the new century. His designs are Greco-Roman, Gothic, and Egyptian, separately treated at times, combined at other times. Elements are combined in the case of the fender (Fig. 13c). While the center of the fender is pierced, the edges have raised elements which are offset by the blackening of the tooled background. This was the English Regency period in furniture (1811-20) and the Empire period in America.



*Figure 13b. Detail of head and shaft of 13a.*





*Figure 13c. Detail of fender of 13a, 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ " HOA, 15" WOA through pins, 1 $\frac{1}{8}$ " DOA.*



*Figure 14a. Charleston, Empire Group IV, brass andirons, ca. 1815. 20 $\frac{1}{4}$ " HOA, 4 $\frac{7}{8}$ " WOA. History of descent in the Bull family of Charleston. Private collection. MESDA research file S-9107.*



*Figure 14b. Side view of 14a with log-stop finial, brass cap (8¼" DOA) on iron billet bar. Compare log-stop finial with Neoclassical-Empire andiron finials in Figure 13 for similarity.*



*Figure 14c. Detail of base. Fender "eye" 4 3/4" HOA, base 4 7/8" HOA, 4 7/8" WOA, 2" DOA.*

Group IV makes its beginning with Figure 13. The transition from Group III via Figure 12a is apparent, and continues this Charleston school of andirons into the Empire style. In the early nineteenth century fireplaces became smaller. With the use of brass in the design of French styles, andirons became shorter and squatty in appearance (Figs. 13-15). The plinth and base are one, unusual in American andirons of this period. The transition was generally to a ball or snake foot.<sup>27</sup> Charleston evidently did not follow this custom. The author was unable to locate a design source for this style of base, probably a French design of this period.

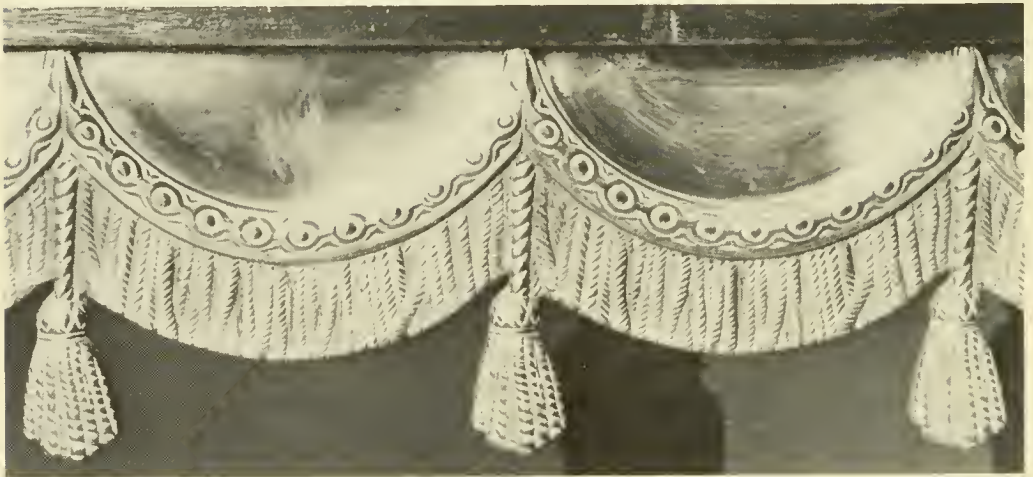
The Empire examples of Group IV illustrate an almost vestigial log-stop which in Figure 13a has been bent forward from the weight of logs.<sup>28</sup> The billet bar is capped with a brass element, pierced to allow the passage of a vertical iron pin for the finial. These were the most complete andirons found of this style. The shape of the head does not match the head in Figure 14a.<sup>29</sup> Note that the log-stop finial (Fig. 14b) matches the finials of Figure 13. The fender evidence in Figure 14 is seen by the "eyes" for the fender pins. This pair of andirons demonstrates the last stage of Group IV development. The heads are round and surmounted with finials similar to the log-stop finials, but more slender. The shafts swell at the bottom and are faceted, as are the tops of the round heads. This faceting of a surface can be found in the table shafts of Figures 15 and 16.

Further identification with Charleston was established through the discovery of an extraordinary table (Fig. 15a).<sup>30</sup> This apparently unique table reflects the French empire taste in cast





*Figure 15a. Library (?) table, Charleston, South Carolina, ca. 1815, mahogany throughout. Center finial gilded. 30 1/8" HOA, 44 1/4" WOA, 37 7/8" DOA. History of previous Kamanski collection, Georgetown, S. C. Private collection. MESDA research file S-9000.*



*Figure 15b. Detail of brass apron of 15a. 4 1/4" HOA.*

brass swags (Fig. 15b) mounted around the entire top. Indications are that this table sat out in a room as a library table. Carrying the brass ornamentation still further, the column bases are of brass andiron plinths and pedestals (Fig. 15c) as seen in Figures 13-15. Detailed examination of the andiron parts incor-





*Figure 15c. Detail of base of 15a. Andiron bases used as supporting elements for columns. Compare with Figure 14 and 15. Brass bases 5" HOA and 2 1/8" DOA.*

porated on this table revealed that the eyes for the fender attachment had been filed off after the part was cast.

A Charleston origin for this table is further strengthened with the table in Figure 16a.<sup>31</sup> Both tables have a history of Georgetown, South Carolina, ownership. Coastal Georgetown is above Charleston and does not appear to have had a recognizable furniture style. The design of both tables is about 1815 and might be thought of New York origin were it not for the brasswork and unusual gilded finial between the turned members. Close examination of both tables evidences the same shop of origin. The brass work in Figure 15 is original although the top and top-to-pedestal attachment have been reworked. The design is correct for this table, as it could never have had a top as in Figure 16; the height is correct for the supporting base of wood turnings and brass andiron parts. The turnings in



*Figure 16a. Card table, Charleston, South Carolina, ca. 1815. Mahogany with cherry block, white pine gilded finial, frame under top. 29 $\frac{1}{4}$ " HOA, closed; 35 $\frac{3}{4}$ " WOA; 18" DOA, closed. History of descent from William Algernon Alston of "Rose Hill" near Charleston, S. C. Private collection. MESDA research file S-2400.*

Figure 15c appear to have been designed for a separate base. There is a bulbous base to the turnings before a shaped mahogany block. This sits atop the brass base.

The combining of andiron parts with furniture is unusual, but with the need for special brass work as the apron, a partnership of a brass founder and a cabinetmaker is suggested. A search for a positive connection failed to locate such a partnership. However, during this period Robert Wallace was a brass founder and Thomas and William Wallace were cabinetmakers. No family or business connection has yet been found.

This empire style of andiron must be Charleston in origin. All evidence says so and examples have not been found elsewhere. These, as with the neoclassical styles, are unmarked. This is not unusual as very few andirons are marked. Even though there are no marked examples, Charleston newspaper advertisements reveal much about Charleston brass manufactures.

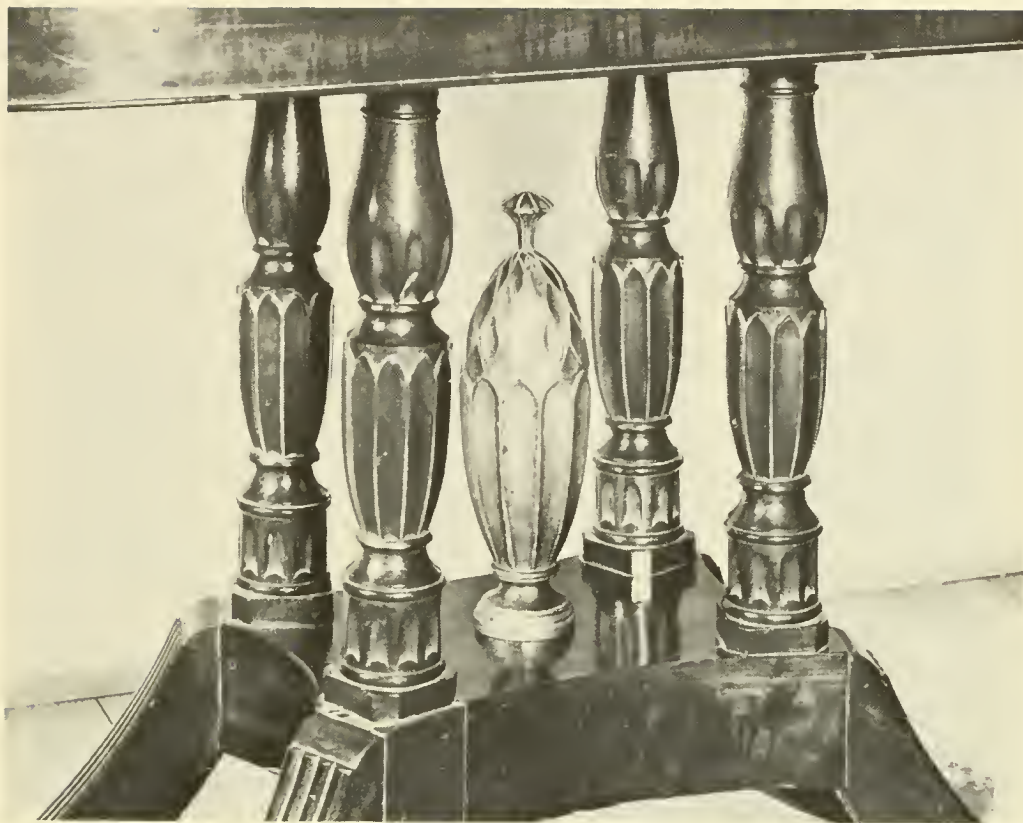


Figure 16b. Detail of base of 16a. Compare with Figure 15c.

The first indication of brass work is that of brazier Anthony Corné in 1735, lately from London, and

living in *Elliott's street Charlestown* maketh and selleth all sorts of Brasier, Pewterer, and Tinman's ware. He also buyeth any old Copper, Brass, Pewter, &c. and Tinneth and mendeth any of the afore mentioned Ware at the lowest prices.

*South-Carolina Gazette*, 13 Dec. 1735, 2-2

From such an advertisement it is difficult to know the scope of his work. In London, specialization would have been normal. However, in Charleston where Corné might have been the only worker in brass, did he follow his training only as a brazier or did he branch out and, if able financially and technically, build a foundry and cast brass when necessary?

How would he have advertised differently? Would he have called himself a brass founder or, as he was trained, a brazier? The scope of production undoubtedly varied according to the brazier's ability. At what point did a brazier begin to call



himself a brass founder, if ever? It is interesting that after the middle of the eighteenth century brass founders' advertisements flourished and fewer artisans advertised as braziers; there were almost no brazier advertisements at the end of the eighteenth century.

Such a transition from brazier to brass founder may be represented by William Linthwaite who,<sup>32</sup> in 1736,

has a fine Sortiment of Indian Trading Kettles and Pewter by him to sell, and makes and mends all sorts of old ones at reasonable Rates, and gives the best Price for old Copper, Brass or Pewter.

*South Carolina Gazette*, Charleston, July 31, 1736, 3-1.

Within a few months he is again advertising:

N. B. The said *Linthwaite* has just imported a fresh assortment of iron and pewter wares, which he will sell Wholesale or Retail at a reasonable Price, for ready Money, he designing to leave off Shop keeping, and to sell only such Goods as he makes himself, *viz.* all sorts of Brass, Copper and Tin Wares, Indian Traders and Storekeepers that will take of no other but him in the Year, may be supplied by him with such Goods in his Trade at the Wholesale Price, tho' they take as small a Quantity as they please. He also buys all sorts of old Brass and Pewter and exchanges new for old.

*South-Carolina Gazette*, Charleston. 12 Mar. 1736/7, 3-1.

In the second advertisement Linthwaite enumerates that he is making "Brass, Copper and Tin Wares." Also, as most braziers say, he buys copper, brass, and pewter. Copper and pewter are malleable, but brass must be melted and then recast. Is this not a founder?

In 1760 appears the first advertisement of a Charleston "brass founder."

*John Robertson,*  
BRASS FOUNDER, in KING STREET.

Begs leave to return thanks to those gentlemen and others who have been pleased to favour him with their



custom, and at the same time inform them that he continues to make, in the neatest manner, all sorts of brass candlesticks, and church lusters or branches—also cabinet, desk, drawer, coach, chair, and chaisse mouldings, brass tongs, shovels and fenders; bells, brass weights, candle moulds, sheet lead, and sash and other lead weights, &c. &c. Likewise all sorts of brasses used by gunsmiths, blacksmiths, &c.

N.B. He also makes all sorts of mill and other machinery work, and soldiers regimental belt, shoe, and knee buckles, and clasps—READY MONEY will be given for old brass, copper, pewter, bell mettall, or lead, by said *Robertson*.

*South-Carolina Gazette*, 16 Dec. 1760, 1-2.

From this it appears that Robertson has been in business for some time and well established. The duration of his business past this advertisement is unknown. He died about 1795.<sup>33</sup> It is interesting that in this long list of products andirons are not mentioned as is other fireplace equipment.

In 1764 is found the first advertisement of Charleston-made brass andirons. Jacob and Solomon Proby<sup>34</sup> advertise that they have moved

their shop from King Street, to the corner of Broad and Meetingstreet, opposite to the new Church, where brass fenders, hand irons, sconces, candlesticks, gun mountings, stirrups, house ornaments, mill work, cocks, house and horse bells, harness work, spoon moulds, and all other kinds of Founders work is done reasonable and expeditiously, They likewise mend and tin copper kettles, and mend china; and give the best price for old copper, brass, pewter, etc. etc.

*South Carolina Gazette*, Charleston, 26 Nov. 1764, 2-1.

The design of these brass hand irons (andirons) can only be conjectured as they were probably of pure Chippendale design. How long the Probys were in business is not known, but they probably had competition from Thomas Arundel Temple, brass founder, of King Street, who died in 1771.<sup>35</sup> Temple evidently did not advertise.

This brings to question the many artisans who worked but never advertised. Either they were not willing to bother with an advertisement or they felt no need: they had all the business they needed. Also, everyone knew where the business was located.

Evidently, John Michael<sup>36</sup> needed to advertise in 1772 and 1773:

JOHN MICHAEL,  
BRASS-FOUNDER and COPPER-SMITH

Takes this Method to inform his Friends and the Public, That he has for SALE A QUANTITY of Brass Fire-Dogs, Tongs and Shovels, of Different Patterns;—Likewise a Quantity of Tea-Kettles, of various Sizes, which he will dispose of as cheap as any imported, at his Shop in *Meeting Street*, near the *State-House*; where he carries on the BRASS-FOUNDRY, COPPER-SMITH, and PLUMBING BUSINESS, in all their Branches, as cheap as can be imported.

N.B. He will give the utmost Value for old Copper, Brass, Pewter, and Lead.

*South Carolina Gazette*, Charleston, 25 Oct. 1773, 3-3.

Here again, andirons (fire-dogs) are for sale and “A Quantity . . . of Different Patterns.” Unfortunately, this is still too early for the neoclassical-style andirons; Robert Adams designs were not published in one volume until 1778.

During this period the last two braziers to advertise in Charleston were John Crawford (1774-75)<sup>37</sup> and Anthony Jankofsky (1777).<sup>38</sup> Perhaps this illustrates the tail end of the transition from brazier to brass founder. Of course, there were some braziers who did not become brass founders, but copper-smiths, iron workers, or pewterers. Those who did stay braziers often worked for a larger industry.

Another brass founder for whom no advertisement has been found was John Mears, who was listed in the 1790 *Charleston Directory* as of 64 Meeting Street. How long before 1790 Mears was operating as a brass founder is unknown. He was not listed in the 1794 *Directory*. However, an Alexander McCliesh, brass founder, was listed at 64 Meeting Street in the 1794 *Directory*. He continued there until 1802, when his address was 56 Meeting Street, remaining there until his death in 1809.<sup>39</sup> From

1797 to 1799 McCliesh was in partnership with John Moss, brass founder.<sup>40</sup>

In 1802, Archibald Buchanan<sup>41</sup> was listed and continued in the directories through 1816. In 1813, he was in partnership with James McCliesh, son of Alexander. James advertised in 1807 as a brass founder and continued to do so until 1810, when he was in the custody of the sheriff. In 1811 we find him in Savannah and by 1813 he was back in Charleston as a brass-founder, copper-smith, and plumber. By 1817 he was back in Savannah, where he died in 1820. The extent of his sporadic business appears to be ship hardware and instruments.<sup>42</sup>

In 1802-1804/5 Robert Wallace was in New York City as a brass-founder producing andirons.<sup>43</sup> In 1806, he and a Nathaniel Lawrence were in partnership in Charleston and advertise that:

#### BRASS FOUNDARY.

#### WALLACE & LARWARCE

FROM New-York, respectfully notify their friends and the public in general, that they have commenced the above Business in all its various branches at No. 11 ELLERY STREET, next door to Mr. Mushett's Blacksmith shop, and hope from their long experience, to merit, by their assiduity, a share of the public patronage. All kinds of Machinery will be executed with fidelity and dispatch; also, shipwork, bell foundary, brass fire-dogs, shovels and tongs of the newest fashions and most improved patterns; all kinds of clocks, guns, pistols cleaned and repaired on the most reasonable terms.

N.B. The highest price given for old Copper and Brass.

*Charleston Courier*, S.C., 31 Dec. 1806, 3-3.

Unfortunately, there are no further advertisements of this partnership, which continued through the 1809 *Charleston Directory*. In this listing both men are at 66 Meeting Street. The 1813 *Directory* lists only Robert Wallace at this address and in 1816 he announced a move:

Notice.

THE subscriber has removed his Shop to the corner of

Meeting and Society streets, where he carried on the business of a

BRASS FOUNDER,

in all its branches; he also intends carrying on the *GUNSMITH'S BUSINESS*, having engaged competent Workmen for that purpose. He returns his sincere thanks to those persons who have favored him hitherto, and respectfully solicits a continuance of their support.

Robert Wallace.

*Times*, Charleston, S. C., 14 March, 1816, 3-3.

Three years later he has moved again, to 393 King Street, still as a brass founder, for his last listing in the *Directory*. The relationship of Robert to two James Wallaces is unknown but in 1816, 108 Meeting Street had one James Wallace listed as a brass founder with another James Wallace with no occupation given.

Indicative of the often sporadic migration of artisans is the listing, in the 1809 Charleston *Directory*, of James Creswell, John Madan, ——— McKernon, and John Debord, all brass founders at different addresses. The directories before and after 1809 list none of these men.

One of the last brass founders to advertise before 1820 was Vincent Barre of 109 East Bay Street, a location next to the warehouses and shipping interests, as reflected in his advertisement:

Vincent Barre,  
BRASS AND IRON FOUNDER,

LATELY arrived in this city, begs leave to acquaint the Public, that he forms and finishes in the most complete manner, every species of Iron Work required on board of shipping; as also, all kinds work for Mills, &c. either upon a large or small scale; also, Brass Work, Metal Pumps of every description, as well as Fire Engines, on the newest French construction; likewise he constructs Private Baths in a new style and taste, as also Water closets, without the least inconvenience attending them.

He hopes to merit the patronage of the citizen of Charleston, by his attention to perform the orders given him. Apply to No. 09, *East Bay*.

*Courier*, Charleston, S. C., 29 September, 1817, 3-2.



Two years later Barre is still at this address and in 1822 is listed in the *Directory* at 2 Amen Street.

The business of Charleston brass founding appears to have diminished around 1820. In 1819 William A. Goodman, of 90 Meeting Street, mentions in a footnote, at the bottom of a venture cargo sale advertisement, that he casts brass for ship and mill work.

Robert Mills in his *Statistics of South Carolina*, in 1826, says that there are ten brass founders and coppersmiths active in Charleston.<sup>44</sup> If this was true, and say five are brass founders, with probably only one advertising, could this be reflective of the eighteenth century?—probably so. If true, our neoclassical and Empire andirons previously described probably will never be attributed to a specific brass founder. A marked example is needed. It would be nice to know the shop which produced the andirons but the recognition of Charleston-made brass and paktong andirons is reward enough.

The taste for Charleston-made andirons was not always paramount, as in the mideighteenth century when chimney-dogs and coal grates were being imported from England. The English transition to coal was well under way by this period<sup>45</sup> and an increasing number of grates were exported. Correspondingly fewer and fewer andirons were produced in England and exported. One of the last advertisements found for andirons imported into Charleston was this:

Just imported in the Ship *Neptune*, Capt. *Ambrose Judd*, from *London*, and to be sold by STEAD & EVANCE, . . . iron wire griddles,—steel stove grates, with fender, shovel, tongs and poker,—very fine polished dogs with brass heads,—steel dogs polished,—also shovel, tongs and bellows and hearth brushes . . .

*South-Carolina Gazette*, Charleston, 20 Aug. 1750, 2-2.

Along with the importation of English-made coal grates throughout the eighteenth century, coal was also imported into the nineteenth century. Two advertisements for coal are:

Choice good Coal to be sold by Joseph Shute, and delivered at the buyer's door for Five Pounds Ten Shillings per Ton, ready money.

*The South Carolina Gazette*, Charleston, Feb. 5, 1753

PUBLIC AUCTION.

THIS DAY, at 10 o'clock, will be sold before my store,  
without reserve,

100 tons NEWCASTLE COALS

In Lots to suit purchasers, and must be taken from the vessel as soon after the sale as they can be delivered.—Terms—CASH.

McM. CAMPBELL (vendue master)

Newcastle Coals are said to be the best in Britain—and supply the London market.

*Charleston Courier*, 24 July 1804, 3-4.

In the second half of the eighteenth century with the absence of imported andirons, Charleston braziers and brass founders tried to fill the need, but an occasional advertisement indicated transcoastal shipment from the North.

JUST imported, and will be sold at first cost  
and charges, by  
JAMES DUTHIE,

In Elliott-street, next door to Isaac Huger's, Esq; A Few pair of CHAMBER DOGS, the handsomest that ever were brought into this province, with large brass twisted, plain and fluted pillars, different sizes, some of them above two feet high, made in New York.<sup>46</sup> A few barrels of superfine flour, water and butter biscuit in kegs.

*South-Carolina Gazette; and Country Journal*,  
Charleston, 1 Mar. 1768, 3-2.

This is an unusually descriptive advertisement of New York andirons, and one reflects upon Jacob and Solomon Proby and John Michael, who have been mentioned as being in business at this time in Charleston. What influence did these andirons have on their andiron designs? This question again rises when in March of 1785 Henry Laurens wrote William Bell, Philadelphia merchant, and asked to be sent "four pair of best Brass Fire Dogs with suitable Shovels Tongs and Fenders if such are companions to the Dogs . . . ." <sup>47</sup> A month later Laurens notified Bell that "the Fire Dogs Shovels and tongs are all satisfactory, the Fenders we may speak of when Summer is wearing off. In the meantime I may recive the opinions of the Ladies [in his family] . . . ." <sup>48</sup>

Again, what effect did these "best Brass Fire Dogs" have upon society, thus forming taste and consequently affecting the brass founder? Could these have been the andirons which cause the neoclassical Group I to appear so Philadelphia-like in the base? Conjecture is interesting.

In conclusion, this study has brought to light for the first time two major groups of Charleston brass andirons. This recognition will enable further product identification of Charleston brass founders. It is to be hoped that marked examples will surface and allow the production of one brass foundry to be separated from others. It is the author's wish that this analysis of Charleston brass founders will stimulate more research in the field of Southern brass foundries and their products.

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## NOTES

1. In 1972 the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts was awarded a grant by the National Endowment for the Humanities to photograph and record decorative arts made in the South prior to 1821. Now, with a year and a half left in the grant, Kentucky, tidewater Virginia, eastern North Carolina, Georgia, and coastal South Carolina have been investigated, with the four field researchers now in Maryland and the Valley of Virginia.
2. The Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts has an ongoing program of microfilming and reading all existing newspapers published in the South prior to 1821. See Frank L. Horton, "The MESDA Microfilming Program," *Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts*, 1977, v. III, no. 1, pp. 36-42. While this program has recorded information from the available Charleston, S. C., newspapers on microfilm, the period from 1780-1800 is mostly not on film and therefore has not been read.
3. Henry J. Kauffman and Quentin H. Bowers, *Early American Andirons and Other Fireplace Accessories* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1974), pp. 54 and 100. Also see Charles F. Montgomery, "Regional Preferences and Characteristics in American Decorative Arts: 1750-1800," *American Art: 1750-1800* (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1976), pp. 53-54.
4. The medial molding on the shaft of this pair is of the Charleston-school neoclassical group. For a comparison of New York medial moldings see Peter, Nancy, and Herbert Schiffer, *The Brass Book* (Exton: Schiffer Publishing Co., 1978), p. 61, Figs. A, B, and D.
5. Compare the reeded head of this pair with the examples in Figure 4.

6. Grace Rogers Cooper, "Thirteen-Star Flags," *Smithsonian Studies in History and Technology*, Number 21 (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1973), pp. 3-12.
7. Charles F. Montgomery and Patricia Kane, eds., *American Art: 1750-1800*, pp. 206-207. See also Bauman L. Belden, *Indian Peace Medals* (New Milford: N. Flayderman & Co., 1966), plates 1-12.
8. These andirons and the pair in Figure 5 have a supporting member under the billet bar. This is vestigial of earlier periods and used for strength when the bar becomes hot during a fire. See Kauffman, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-37, and Schiffer, *op. cit.*, p. 64.
9. For a similar engraved basket of flowers see Schiffer, *op. cit.*, Fig. A, p. 63. For an example of a basket of flowers on a Federal mahogany card table, of probable Charleston origin, see Helen Comstock, *American Furniture* (New York: The Viking Press, 1962), Figure 555.
10. The spurs on this pair and examples 5-7 are identical in that the ends are painted and do not round over as in Group I (Figures 1-3). The billet bars of this pair do not have the drop-angle or the pyramidal log-stop, thus they could be replacements.
11. This edition contains upwards of 350 designs on 120 copper plates, is undated, and was published in London. For a discussion of this see Peter Ward-Jackson, *English Furniture Designs* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1958), pp. 51-52.
12. The billet bar on this pair is like Group I but the pyramidal log-stop is also seen. This is a transitional example as the log-stop is small. An unusual feature of this pair is that on the billet bar is a brass cap extending from the rear of the shaft to the log-stop. This is not on the other examples of the neoclassical style. For examples of this on pre1800 andirons see Kauffman, *op. cit.*, pp. 102 and 108. These are straight billet bars and ca. 1795-1800. This comparison (Fig. 5c) is made between the andiron husk or bellflower and the ivory inlaid husk or bellflower of the Holmes secretary-bookcase (MESDA Research File S-8000). This is to illustrate the engraving-like decoration on the furniture inlay with that on the brass example. The furniture inlay is only one example of a school of inlay technique of scratch-work seen on several examples of Charleston furniture of this period.
13. Though the percentages vary, tutenag is 50 parts copper, 19 parts nickel, and 31 parts zinc.
14. In researching Paktong the author was amazed to discover how little has been researched on this alloy. One article is Katherine Coombes and W. D. John, "Paktong, the Unusual Material Used by Robert Adam," *The Antique Dealer and Collector's Guide* (London: The Journal Press, 1970), June, pp. 88-90. Finished products of tutenag were being imported as the *Baltimore City Directory* of 1810 lists a 17½ % tax on this alloy. Because of the high tax, one assumes that the product is finished, not the raw material. However, the raw material evidently was on the market and could be imported, as is revealed in the *Alexandria Daily Gazette*, Alexandria, Virginia, March 14, 1811, p. 3.



INFORMATION  
TO BRASS FOUNDERS.

Extract of a letter from Samuel L. Mitchell, representative in congress, to Mr. J. Curtis, dated Washington, Feb. 19, 1811.

The petition of the Brass Founders of New York, has been considered by the committee of commerce and manufactures. The prevalent opinion there is, that the existing law admits "zinc" or "spelter" free from duty, under the name of *brass tutenague* or *tutenage*. This is one of the forms in which spelter comes to market, and is, the name by which that metal seems to be known in our statute. If orders and invoices were made out, by this technical word, no difficulty is apprehended of importing it, upon terms as liberal as you wish. I hope you will value very highly this early and generous regulation of our government, made for the purpose of facilitating and fostering the metallic arts in our country. Be obliging enough to inform the trade of this view of a subject which they have so much at heart.

15. This exceptional pair have an unusually high log-stop. The engraving on the shafts is very similar to composition work illustrated in Charles Harris Whitaker, ed., *The Octagon Library of Early American Architecture* (New York: Press of the American Institute of Architects, Inc., 1927), Vol. I (Charleston), unnumbered pages, "Judge King's House Palladian Window." This composition work was imported from England and also made in coastal cities like Baltimore.
16. The rare case of a silversmith running a brass foundry is Paul Revere. This developed out of his iron foundry, which he started in 1788. In the 1790s he was casting brass for the frigate *Constitution*. See Clarence S. Brigham, *Paul Revere's Engravings* (New York: Atheneum, 1969), pp. 4 and 6. See also Henry J. Kauffman, *American Copper & Brass* (Camden: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1968), p. 175, and Martha Gandy Fales, *Early American Silver* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1973), pp. 225 and 226.
17. Montgomery, *op. cit.*, pp. 53 and 54.
18. This pair has an unusual horizontal member on the rear of the billet bar which may be a later addition.
19. The pair in 8a are yellow in color and not the orange of other examples in Group III, indicating a higher percentage of zinc than normal. The Research Laboratory of the Henry Francis duPont Winterthur Museum kindly examined the andirons in Figures 8a, 9, 10, and 11. An element analysis was determined by X-ray fluorescence in the laboratory of each of the four pairs. The results were not conclusive to say that on the basis of composition they were from a single source. As is known, scrap brass, copper, bronze, and other metal were used for foundry melts. Perhaps one day, when enough tests are performed on American brass products, a pattern will emerge, especially in the very early period of foundry development in the colonies.
20. The andiron illustrated in 8b has engraving similar to Figure 6a. While this pair has not been seen by the author, they appear from the photograph to be very fine examples.

21. This design source contains "sixty different designs . . . forty of which are Gothic, Chinese mosaic, and ornamental frets proper for friezes . . . , book cases, tea tables, tea stands, trays." See Ward-Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 47, plate 124.
22. The log-stops on this pair have ridges around the edges of the top half as if something originally screwed on the top. However, the ridges are not screw-like so it could be decorative as the point tapers along these ridges and then is pyramidal.
23. The capitals on this pair and those in Figure 11 are steplike and peculiar to these two pairs. When viewed from above, the shaft illustrates that a plate had to be brazed inside the top of the shaft to support the head, because of the omission of the tapered element.
24. The pair in Figure 11 must represent the cheapest andiron to be purchased because of casting flaws on the reverse side of the shafts and even a rectangular piece has been inlet, probably to eliminate a major imperfection.
25. This unusual pair was located through a query in *The Magazine Antiques*, v. CXV, no. 3 (New York: Straight Enterprises), March 1979, p. 588, in which the author illustrated one of the pair in Figure 10. This pair (Figure 12) are privately owned in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, where they were acquired in an antique store. The condition and price indicate they had been thought of as antiques. Therefore, they probably had been in Portsmouth for a long time. In the last quarter of the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries there was considerable traffic between Charleston and New England.
26. Compare the andirons illustrated in Figure 13 to a pair in Alice R. Huger Smith and D. E. Huger Smith, *The Dwelling Houses of Charleston, South Carolina* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1917), p. 319.
27. Kauffman, *op. cit.*, p. 63. Also letter to author from Mr. Quentin H. Bowers, Harrisonburg, Virginia (coauthor of *Early American Andirons*), dated January 5, 1979, reveals this regression in base design, after 1800, to snake or pad feet, similar to those found in the Queen Anne period.
28. This pair and those in Figure 14 have the drop-angle billet bar as was seen in the neoclassical Group I. This is a return to an earlier design as mentioned in note 27.
29. These had one remaining log-stop finial. The vertical posts for the finial had a threaded end. Another pair identical to these was found in Charleston with a Philip Porcher family history (MESDA Research File S-9100).
30. This unusual brass treatment is rare in furniture. In Philadelphia, Joseph B. Barry & Son, and in New York, Charles-Honoré Lannier both used brass for decoration on furniture. However, this is of a more ornate nature. The table in Figure 15, with its heavy brass usage, is unique in America. A design source for a French table with fabric-like brass swags on the front is illustrated in Edward T. Joy, *English Furniture 1800-1851* (London: Ward Lock Limited, 1977), p. 42. This is the Weisweiler-attributed pier table whose design source was Sheraton's *Drawing Book*. (Appendix, plate 31), 1793.

31. This card table was at first thought to be from New York, but with the discovery of the table in Figure 15 it is believed to be of Charleston origin. These two tables are not constructed nor have columns, reeding, and finials like New York examples. See letter from Charles F. Montgomery, 14 March 1972, about the table in Figure 17 (MESDA Research File S-2400).
32. William Linthwaite, brazier, is first mentioned in the *South Carolina Gazette*, Charleston, South Carolina, February 1, 1734/5, p. 3. On October 17, 1738, he was buried. *South Carolina Gazette*, Charleston, S. C., November 2, 1738, p. 3. Linthwaite's wife, Eleanor, evidently remarried as the *South Carolina Gazette*, Charleston, S. C., December 4, 1740, p. 3, announces that Mrs. Sandwell, the brazier, lived across from a fire. His will leaves "shop and appurtenances" to his wife Eleanor. *Wills of Charleston County, South Carolina*, v. 4, 1738-40, p. 117.
33. *The Philadelphia City Directory* for 1793 lists a James Robertson, 42 North Front St. The connection, if any, between James and John is not known.
34. From 1766-69 there was a John Proby who also was a brass founder in Charleston, living and working at the sign of the Tea-Kettle and Candlestick. He also was a coppersmith and made ironplate. The length of his business is not known. See *South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal*, Charleston, S. C., July 1, 1766, p. 2; also, December 5, 1769, p. 3.
35. *South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal*, Charleston, S. C., January 14, 1722, p. 2.
36. See *South Carolina Gazette*, Charleston, S. C., December 24, 1772, p. 1, for a very similar advertisement.
37. *South Carolina and American General Gazette*, Charleston, S. C., August 5, 1774, p. 1, and *South Carolina Gazette*, Charleston, S. C., January 5, 1775, p. 1.
38. *Ibid.*, April 10, 1777, p. 1.
39. The brass foundry of Alexander McCliesh is of particular interest as it was in operation, at least, during Group III of the neoclassical andirons discussed earlier. After McCliesh died his estate was settled and his house of 9 Saint Phillips Street was advertised for sale. See *Charleston Courier*, Charleston, South Carolina, August 15, 1809, p. 3. This house at 9 Saint Phillips Street was listed as his residence, and his foundry was at 56 Meeting Street. See *Charleston City Directory* from 1802 through 1807. A little over a year later a notice in the *Times*, Charleston, South Carolina, November 8, 1810, p. 2, offers a house, furniture, and a Negro man for sale, located at 4 Quince Street, as belonging to the estate of Alexander McCliesh. Of interest is that the Negro man was "about 40 years old [and] an excellent Brass Founder." The house of 9 St. Phillips Street was still for sale in this notice.
40. *Charleston City Directory* 1797; also, *Carolina Gazette*, Charleston, S. C., October 31, 1799, p. 4, and November 14, 1799, p. 3.



41. A check of Buchanan's will located in *Record of Wills Charleston County, South Carolina*, v. 36, Book A, 1818-1826, p. 717, failed to reveal the foundry.
42. From the newspaper accounts James McCliesh had an active and troubled life after he apparently inherited his father's brass foundry. (*Charleston Courier*, Charleston, S. C., February 7, 1809, p. 3). He married Miss Mary Guy (*Charleston Courier*, Charleston, S. C., July 14, 1808, p. 3), was in custody of the sheriff of Charleston (*Times*, Charleston, S. C., August 14, 1810, p. 3), then moved to Savannah, Georgia, October 22, 1811, p. 3). Later he returned to Charleston and married Miss Ann Williams (*Times*, Charleston, S. C., March 29, 1813, p. 3), again operates his brass foundry, and then leaves for Savannah again (*Columbian Museum & Savannah Daily Gazette*, Georgia, August 14, 1817, p. 1) and died (*The Daily Georgian*, Savannah, April 11, 1820, p. 3).
43. The New York listing for Robert Wallace is from Kauffman, *op. cit.*, p. 69, where he is included in a list of known brass andiron makers. The author, in a telephone conversation with Quentin Bowers in March, 1979, learned that Bowers had seen a pair of andirons marked "Robert Wallace." The present whereabouts of these are now unknown. The *New York City Directory* lists a Robert Wallace from 1802 through 1804/05 as brassfounder at "18 Cherry [Street?]." The 1805 *New York City Directory* does not list Wallace. The 1802 *Directory* lists an Andrew Wallace as a brassfounder also at 18 Cherry; the relationship is unknown. Nathaniel Lawrence, a partner with Robert Wallace in Charleston, is not listed as a brassfounder in New York. The design of these andirons is unknown; if found they would aid in the further identification of the Charleston school.
44. Robert Mills, *Statistics of South Carolina* (Charleston: Hurlbut and Lloyd, 1826), p. 427.
45. L. A. Shuffrey, *The English Fireplace* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1912), pp. 149-154, 201-216.
46. A remarkable pair of andirons matching this description were found near Charleston and could well be the same pair. MESDA Research File S-9120 illustrates these; the shafts are vase-shaped, fluted, and twisted.
47. "Letters from Henry Laurens to William Bell of Philadelphia," *The South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* (Baltimore: William & Wilkins Company, 1923), pp. 2 and 3, letter dated March 12, 1785, from Charleston.
48. "Letters," *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5, letter from "Mempkin Plantation, 30 miles from Charleston, 23rd April 1785."

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